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VERY SUCCESSFUL

BY

LADY LYTTON BULWER.

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DEDICATION.

TO DR. PRICE, M.D., F.R.C.P.E.

MY DEAR DR. PRICE,

IN availing myself of your kind permission to dedicate this book to you, I must begin with a regret and an apology. A regret that this being a utilitarian, or *every-one-for-himself* Age, the days of Dedications, properly so called, are at an end; as, generally speaking,

“Nos hæc novimus esse nihil.”

For to the good (as in the present instance), printed panegyrics may, indeed, more widely disclose their virtues, but cannot increase them by a single ray. And, on the other hand, old George Herbert counsels wisely when he says—

“Feed no man in his sinnes: for adulation
Doth make thee parcell-devil in damnation.”

Still, I, on my own account, regret the extinction of the good, old, florid, elaborate Dedication, as in one of those I should have had room for at least an *inventory* of your good qualities. And yet, I am not sure that they may not all be as effectually summed up in a very brief space, by saying, that no one can see you without

suspecting you are a genuinely, and, what is better still, an *actively* and zealously benevolent person; and no one can have the privilege of knowing you, without experiencing you to *be* such, whether they merely require the aid of your professional skill (in which few equal, and none surpass you), or whether they want that more general sympathy and aid due from one human being to another, so universally required, though, alas! by no means so universally *found*; but which in you is, like mercy, of that "unstrained quality" which *only* avoids granting requests by always anticipating them. Nor do I think that having made your acquaintance in that little dirty sink of iniquity, Llangollen, at all made me, by the force of contrast, exaggerate your good qualities, as I find that in another and more congenial hemisphere they shine out just as pre-eminently.

And now for my apology. As this Book was ready, and was to have appeared last May, but for the *place aux Messieurs*, which always reigns and rules in England, the publisher, who was to have brought it out, having the works of two gentlemen to produce at the same time, could not venture upon so stupendous (!) an enterprise as publishing a third consecutively; therefore, *my* Book was of course to go to the wall till October. Such being the case, I preferred publishing it under my own auspices, which, in a pecuniary point of view, is all the better for *me*; though I fear that the Book having been written *currente calamo* up to a certain period, it may, from waiting so long, seem flat as champagne two days opened, and therefore dedicating it to you under these circumstances, is very like asking you to a *réchauffé* dinner; but as *that* is a thing you are very sure I would never do, I hope this conviction will be a sufficient apology for my *gracing* this tardy *ambigu* with your name. As far as *you* are concerned, I *could* say a great deal more, but!—but! I have no "enterprising publishers," à la Routledge, to disseminate financial flames for me, which I regret, seeing that the British public greatly resembles the whale in an old line-engraving representing the *contretiens* of Jonah, wherein the said whale is portrayed with jaws wide-opened like a triumphal arch, and a throat capacious enough not only to swallow Jonah, but ANYTHING! in which latter particular, it

must be confessed, the "pensive (query pence-give) public" is "very like a whale!" But still—as the aforesaid public is, despite its slight obliquity of vision, beginning to get a *glimmering* as to the sort of dirty rags and glittering tinsel of which Authors, with some few honorable exceptions, are composed—were I to expatiate, as I have ample materials for doing, on your many estimable traits, it might simply sum up these indisputable facts, and my appreciation of them, wholly and solely into a total of my (scribbler like) having, above all things, "an eye to business," by wanting the world to know that I had got A FABULOUSLY GOOD PRICE FOR MY BOOK! *Cela posé*, one word on my *farrago libelli*. It is the fashion in certain quarters, among other "weak inventions of the enemy," to accuse me of personality in my books; to which I have only to say, that I should indeed be a bungler if I were to mould any fictitious character which had *not* its type in nature and reality. For instance, I will not attempt to deny that, barring his *physique*, bay-wig and Hessians, there are a great many things in the conduct of Mr. Phippen so applicable to your own mode of going through the world, that you are quite welcome to take them for personalities, if you please. As for the Fudgesters, Beaucherches, and other minnows composing my *dramatis personæ*, if they feel "their withers" *too much* "wrung," I could defend myself as Molière did, when Mdlle. de Brie urged him, in return for the intrigues of the Hôtel de Bourgogne against him, to show that *clique* up, more especially its chief, Boursault:—"Vous êtes folle," said he, "*le beau sujet à divertir la Ville et la Cour que M. Boursault! Je voudrais bien savoir de quelle façon on pourroit l'ajuster pour le rendre plaisant; et si, quand on le berneroit sur un théâtre, il seroit assez heureux de faire rire le monde?*"*

I could, I repeat, borrow these words for my defence, but I shall avail myself of no such limited liability; but merely say, if the cap fits, in Heaven's name, or that of its antipodes, let them wear

* "You are mad," said he; "a fine subject, truly, to amuse the Town and the Court with, M. Boursault would be! I should like to know in what way one could handle him so as to render him amusing; and if, after one had tossed him in a blanket, or turned him into every sort of ridicule, one would be fortunate enough to succeed in making people laugh at him?"

DEDICATION.

for there is a *sui generis* in the unscrupulous blackguardism
it has so long and so relentlessly been exercised towards me
it must be dealt with *sui generis*. And now, *vale*, my dear
PRICE; and, sincerely hoping that your health may continue
improve at Brighton, allow me to subscribe myself, as I have so
often done before, and as I hope to do so often again,

Your grateful and obliged Friend,

ROSINA BULWER LYTTON.

September 18th, 1856.

VERY SUCCESSFUL.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAST POST KNOCK.

RAT, tat!—Rat, tat!—Rat, tat!—Rat, tat!—sharply echoed through a dark gloomy wainscoted parlour in one of those erst of old good houses in Church Street, Chelsea, now portioned out into cheap lodgings for struggling respectability, or *vice versa*? It was the postman's last appeal for that day; and, like Fate's auctioneer as he is, having always much business on his hands, he seemed in a hurry to despatch it and knock down the different "lots" of weal or woe intrusted to him to their respective owners. So he kept on, going! going! till he was at length gone!—out of the dull street, and had passed the windows of the dark wainscoted parlour without even vouchsafing a single glance towards them, although behind the small square panes of one of them, was a pair of eyes almost like burning-glasses eagerly watching his every movement, and the heart that belonged to those eyes was beating nearly as loud and as sharply as the knocks he had been so imperatively distributing on the different doors. But, having sown his divers grains of destiny broad-cast, he went his way, heedless how they might fructify or blight; and turned out of the dull street just as the ruddy sun of an English July evening was retiring for the night, enveloped in that most unbecoming of all *déshabilles*, a London fog.

"Another day,—and nothing!" burst from a pair of quivering lips of the same firm as the before-mentioned eyes and heart, which indeed belonged to a lady, who, notwithstanding the perfect, nay, almost severe, simplicity of her plain grey silk dress and small white linen collar, and the care-worn expression of her face, seemed as if she had, at no very distant time, looked through gayer windows on far brighter prospects than that narrow dismal street. But that inexorable distributor of hopes, fears, and disappointments, the postman, had past, and left nothing for *her* but the latter; and she sank down into an old, heavy, mahogany, three-cornered, horse-hair chair, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

Now this old triangular chair, although in the vernacular of that particular lodging-house it went by the fulsomely flattering name

of the *easy* chair, yet was as guiltless of affording any of that demoralising luxury to its occupants, with which Hannibal is said to have enervated his troops at Capua, as the steps of a hall door are to the houseless wretches who convert them into a bed! Indeed, the whole of the furniture was of that cumbrous, hard, heavy style, contemporaneous with Dr. Johnson, and seemed with a sort of silent adulation to have aped at least the external *contour* of the great lexicographer, more especially the three-cornered arm-chair, in which the poor lady was crying so bitterly, for there was in its wooden physiognomy, and the rough heartiness of its extended lion-pawed mahogany arms, a sort of ungracious kindness, such as the chair in which Johnson sat *must have felt* when the Doctor was fondling and feeding his cat "Hodge" with those smuggled oysters which he himself had been out to buy, rather than jeopard "Hodge's" popularity with the servants by giving them the additional trouble of being the cat's purveyors. A good trait, a *very* good trait this, in that Leviathan of literature, who, from disporting himself and taking his pastime in the deep waters of knowledge, could still find both heart and time to cater for his cat; *this*, and his unflagging kindness to poor Goldsmith, are quite sufficient to polish for posterity even his three or four rustiest and most one-sided prejudices.

But to return to the poor lady, whom we left weeping, by that declining light, in that old three-cornered chair. Her history, at least the substance of it, is soon told; it was one of early disobedience to parents, reaping in the toils and trials of after life that bitter harvest which is invariably sown by such seeds. Mrs. Pemble, as she now called herself (though that was not her real name), had been the daughter of an Admiral, and the granddaughter and niece of a Peer. Early in life she had formed a ball-room attachment for a handsome young *Vau-rien* in a dragoon regiment, the only son of a rich brewer; but, notwithstanding his glut of gold, which, in this commercial country, generally gilds *all* things, from want of worth to want of birth, and, notwithstanding the daily increasing examples of Nobility soldered to Mobility by the all-powerful cement of wealth, still her family had other views for her, and, from the *roué* reputation of the handsome cornet, decidedly opposed their daughter's union with him, which opposition ended in her eloping with him; and as her family never would receive her husband, or even see *her* afterwards, and as no settlements had been made on her, she was left entirely at her husband's mercy, and had nothing to trust to but his honour! Poor, poor woman!

Alas! my young lady friends, it should be at least *part* of your education to know that notwithstanding the much boasted British constitution, it does not contain a *single law* for the protection or redress of married women; unless, indeed, they be the possessors of large property stringently tied up upon *themselves*; then they,

or rather, their money, is amply protected, for in England property being the *only* thing legislated for, the very smallest coin of the realm is far more cared for than a human being with an immortal soul; and hence it is in our monetary code that a halfpenny will outweigh a heart, and a sovereign a soul, any day. Now, as such laws for the oppression of woman are certainly not very creditable to us in an age of progression like the present, and as it is not to be supposed that when "*the collective wisdom*" of a nation could either frame or continue such, the aggregate of mankind would have a very nice or chivalric sense of "honor" to counter-balance and neutralize the pernicious prerogatives of such unequal laws,—young ladies, instead of that vulgar servant-maidish eagerness to be married, or, as in kitchen parlance, they more elegantly express it, to "*get married*," should at all events *look* before they leap; as there is also another consideration, which ought to make them doubly cautious before they take this irrevocable, and too often fatal plunge, which is the fearful odds, that according to the very immoral conventionalities of society, exist against them, they, no doubt, in the innocence of their hearts and the ignorance of their heads, imagine that the marriage vows are a *dual* responsibility, solemn and indissoluble as God ordained them; and on the woman's side so they are, for, as the gravitation of the world would be endangered were a single atom added to or subtracted from the universal whole, so let a woman without even the slightest moral culpability deviate but a *hair's-breadth* from that beaten track, and the equilibrium of her whole fate is perilled; but with men it is very *different*; they have concocted a code of conventional morality (?) adapted to their actions. What used to be wrong, is now right; for in their system of ethics, like Molère's Doctors in Anatomy, *ils ont changé toute cela*. For the vows they make at the altar to love and to cherish a wife in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, to cleave to her only—according to *their* reading means, to desert her the moment the whim seizes them for any and every other woman. And as for endowing her with all their worldly goods, *that*, like Hebrew, they seem to read backwards, and interpret into getting every single thing they can out of their wives, and then thinking it is no matter if they, the wives, be left to starve, or subjected to every drudgery, privation, and humiliation, provided themselves, the husbands, can wallow in luxury, or riot in pleasure. On the other hand it is certain that those men who do *not* avail themselves of this broad hard licence, which vice originated, and which that great rivet of all vice, Custom, has confirmed, but who restrict themselves within the stringent circle of duties which God has imposed, cannot be too highly prized, nor too carefully cherished; therefore, such men have a right, not only to expect sensible, agreeable, and well-informed companions in the woman they marry, but a *help meet* in every sense of the word, for a wife, to be worthy of the name,

should as *thoroughly* understand the art (for it *is* an *art*, and one of the very finest,) of domestic economy, in all its branches, and the science of *comfort* in each of its myriad phases; in short, how to be able to make her husband's home happy when he is well, and how to turn illness itself into a luxury by gentle, intelligent, anticipatory, and *noiseless* nursing. Believe me, my dear young ladies, a little such homely, womanly lore as this, would place you on a far higher pedestal than the smattering you now receive of those ephemeral and bird-lime accomplishments, which, may, indeed, snare a husband, but will never secure him.

Now, Mrs. Pemble was well calculated to inculcate all those excellent but unchartered knowledges which go to the making of a happy HOME—all those subtle, unobtrusive, heart-graces which, when carefully selected, tempered, polished, and linked, form the electric chain of duties which constitutes the wisdom of woman: for she had acquired them one by one, in the dear, but unrivalled school of experience, and strengthened them in the moral gymnasium of fortitude and necessity. Soon after her ill-fated marriage her worthless husband began to revenge upon her the neglect with which he was treated by her family; while *his*, though many of them were still in trade, looked down upon his well-born but penniless wife, as their members were daily contracting alliances with "Lady Janes" and "Lady Julias," whose parents were only too happy to pay every deference to their superior wealth, and therefore they had no idea that a mere Admiral, only the brother of a Lord, who had not given his daughter a shilling, should give himself such airs with regard to *their* family, who could *buy* and *sell his*. So after ten long miserable years, God saw fit to release poor Mary Pemble from her bondage, and leave her, at all events unfettered, to swim through a sea of troubles, and stem its adverse tide as best she might, for after considerable losses at Newmarket, her husband died in a fit of *delirium tremens*, leaving an only son—a fine noble-hearted boy—who, as yet, had not time either to be perverted or corrupted, and so remained the "silver lining" of his poor mother's cloud; but as he was destined for the army, at the age of fourteen he went to Sandhurst, and as long as war was only theoretical, and military glory but a gorgeous abstract, the mother's heart, of course, glowed with a natural pride at the triumphant examinations her son passed, and the honorable testimonials he obtained; but when this said war, "ambition's gory plaything," became a stern reality, and Harcourt—her one thought, one feeling, and only hope—though only eighteen, was ordered with his regiment to the Crimea, what would not the wretched mother have given to have gone with the lady nurses to Scutari?

But, alas! even to play the ministering angel effectually (or rather with impunity) in England, requires the patent of patronage, and the same abnegation of self, which is truly heroic and beyond all praise in one, is obnoxious to every animadversion in another;

rendering them liable to be branded with that concrete vituperative "a strong minded woman!"—and so, the poor mother had only her woman's heritage of tears and endurance to fall back upon; and after having sold her pretty cottage at Ivor, near Uxbridge, and parted with everything available to give her son a far more luxurious, because better planned and combined, outfit than many of his superior officers, Mrs. Pemble found herself thrown on the world, with that widely-differing portion, in different persons, her own resources! And house-rent and the paraphernalia of weekly bills, however moderate, being precisely what she could *not* afford, she thought if she could but get a situation as a governess—no matter how small the salary—by obtaining food and shelter gratis, it would be still in her power to continue to supply Harcourt with many little comforts, which would be, otherwise, unattainable for either of them.

Now, though £20 or £30 a year is, certainly, sufficient for teaching young ladies ignorance, bad English, and husband-hunting, Mrs. Pemble's acquirements were such as might have justly entitled her to more; yet she was far from viewing the matter in this light, for, thanks to that anti-commercial argil, of which all real ladies and gentlemen are, unfortunately, composed; wherever driving a bargain was concerned, she invariably underrated her own pretensions; moreover, she had another difficulty in her way, which made her ready to consent to any additional sacrifice, which was her seeking an engagement under a feigned name; and though she had honestly told all who seemed likely to enter into a negotiation with her that it was *not* her real name, still she felt, that with many, either from principle, or from prejudice (and how often does the latter conceive itself the former); this alone would be an insuperable objection to their engaging her; then why had she adopted this objectionable plan? The motive was a mixed one, as most motives of expediency, or, at least, of fancied expediency are: for although neither her own nor her husband's relations had ever recognised her existence since the hour she married; yet as each of them considered themselves very great people in their different orbits, and, consequently, though they would have felt it no derogation to their grandeur had their relation on the one side, and their connexion on the other, died of starvation, it would have been a very different thing had the escutcheon of her own family, or the rental of her husband's, received such a blot, as to know that anything belonging to *them*! was guilty of the virtuous vulgarity of earning their bread! And however passive relations may be to serve, their activity to injure is generally in an inverse ratio, and one of the last privileges which parentage willingly relinquishes, is that of *interfering*.

It was the knowledge of all these things which induced the widow to lay aside her own name, and adopt the *nom de gagne pain* of Pemble; though we will not pretend to deny that in so doing,

she was still more influenced by Harcourt's feelings and Harcourt's interests, for she had suffered too severely herself from the cold stagnant conventionality of English society, not to be fully aware that should her *unpatronaged* son prove to unite in his own person the unsullied honor of a Bayard, and the unsurpassed daring of the two Scipios, whom Virgil called the Thunderbolts of War, yet once known at the mess, or the Horse Guards, aye, or even at the cannon's mouth, that his mother was a working governess! good bye to all his chances of preferment, and to the just grade of his social position; and, however much she might have wavered in weighing all these *pros* and *cons*, of *trading* under a feigned name,—yet, no sooner was Harcourt thrown into the balance, than he immediately turned the scale; and the alternative was resolved upon. And once resolved,—Mrs. Pemble, as we shall for the present continue to call her, was a person to *act*, and not to *despair*, for truly it is well said by an old writer: “Despair, as it respects the business, and events of life, is an uneasy and impolitic passion; it antedates a misfortune, and torments the heart before its time. It spreads a gloominess upon the soul, and makes her live in a luncheon. It preys upon the vitals like Prometheus's vulture, and eats out the heart of all other satisfactions. It cramps the powers of nature and cuts the sinews of enterprise, and gives being to many cross accidents which would never otherwise happen. To believe a business impossible, is the way to make it so.”

Therefore Mrs. Pemble did *not* suffer the palsy of despair to paralyse her son's and her own prospects. No, she put her boulder bravely to the wheel, which is the only manner by which the heavy laden wheel of fortune is ever propelled—came to London—took that gloomy wainscoted parlour, and an adjoining bedroom, in Church Street, Chelsea, at twelve shillings a week, and advertised for the situation of a governess; for she *was*, we confess, not only without fear but with much honest pride in our sex, **A STRONG-MINDED WOMAN!** Yea, verily!—and strong-hearted and strong-conscienced too, as all those poor camp followers in the battle of life—**WOMEN**, have need to be.

CHAPTER II.

THE ADVERTISEMENT IN “THE TIMES.”

It is an unfortunate fact, almost without an exception, that hard hearts and soft heads generally go together; and the only evil of this is, when the *head* don't take the initiative on the score of *hardness*, and leave all the down to its better-half the heart, which, in so-called “strong-minded women,” is precisely what it does do, and so poor Mrs. Pemble sat in that old three-cornered chair,

leaning her hard head in her poor shadowy hands, which her soft heart deluged with tears, for, as we before said, the last Postman had passed and brought her no letter from Harcourt, if, indeed, such a person was still in existence. It was, also, the last day in the week but one; she had been a whole month in that gloomy wainscoted room, stared out of countenance by those great, unwieldy, solemn, Samuel-Johnson-looking, horsehair chairs, and she had expended nearly four pounds in advertisements, only three of which had been answered; one by the "*lady*" (for so they styled themselves) of a retired drysalter, another, by the *lady* of a gentleman, who was a wholesale agent for "Norton's Camomile Pills," and retailed other drugs as well, and the third, by the widow of a retired coach maker, living at "Varnish Villa, Pentonville." She had suited none of these, and none of them had suited her. We verily believe that all exceptional natures have a responding nature in some part of the world, which would tone into harmonious utterances with theirs, and "discourse most excellent music," could they but meet and be attuned together; but how and where to stumble on them is the question; for this poor crazy old world seems to be the harp of the Fates, who, between them (having but this *one* instrument to play upon), are always losing, snapping, or mislaying the chords, and hence the terrible and jarring discords of which that *Opera Seria*, called Life, is composed; and when the instrument is thus dilapidated, it becomes almost like an æolian harp, which every breeze that blows affects more or less; and it is for this reason, that prisoners in solitary confinement make to themselves companions, nay friends, of spiders, of mice, of shadows of *anything* save darkness, and so it was that within this weary month, tired of the monotonous beatings of her own heart, Mrs. Pemble had learned to watch for, at a certain hour of the morning and evening, with an eagerness that almost amounted to excitement, the creaking of an old gentleman's boots who lodged in what the maid of the house called "the first floor front," as he kept up a sort of quarter-deck perambulation sometimes for hours together, and by way of investing a still farther interest in him, and, indeed, also for the sake of hearing a human voice in reply, she, one evening inquired, when the universal maid brought in tea, followed by her constant companion, "Tim," the black cat, "Who lodged above stairs?"

And the reply was:—"Mr. Phillip Phippen, who *ad* a business of some sort in the city, but she did not *zactly* know what, only that he was quite a *helderly* gentleman;" from which an illogical mind might have inferred that his business was to be an elderly gentleman; but, being a "strong-minded woman," Mrs. Pemble had *not* an illogical mind, and so did not draw this inference, nor indeed any other, from Sarah's information. But whether Sarah (or "*Sarah* Nash," as the old gentleman aforesaid invariably called her with a sort of Parish Register particularity), had or had not

reported the widow's inquiry to Phillip Phippen; and that he as all old bachelors are bound to do, had felt a certain little flutter of vanity at *being* inquired about (although for the last twenty years he had taken refuge from widows, and all other whirlpools, in those creaking Hessians, surmounted by a bay wig), or whether the act proceeded from mere neighbourly civility, we cannot say; but certain it is, that from that out, he might be daily heard either in the morning or evening, calling out over the stairs, as the Hessians came creaking down them:—"Sárah!—Sárah Nash!—perhaps the lady in the parlour would like to see *The Times*?"

Upon the present occasion it was evening, nearly nine o'clock, when "Sárah Nash" was evoked, and that true-born Briton's *vade mecum* had scarcely rustled between her ruddy fingers ere the hall door was slammed to, after giving egress to Mr. Phippen, who rapidly buttoning the three last buttons of his brown surtout to his throat, giving a sort of pound to the top of his hat, so as to compel its closer allegiance to his bay wig, and bestowing on his somewhat portly and voluminous gingham umbrella another pound with the inner part of his left arm, so as to make sure that it *was*, as all old campaigners should be in these militant times, under arms; he strode hastily up the street, with that sort of "wind and tide waiting for no man" rapidity, which those who have inhaled the auriferous atmosphere of Threadneedle Street for many years, are apt to contract from having imbibed as it were, at every pore, the great commercial truth, *TIME IS MONEY*!

"Please *um*,—Mr. Phippen 'ave sent you the *noose* paper," said "Sárah Nash," who had it is true gone through the ceremony of knocking, as a sort of castanet accompaniment to her own *entrée*, but had not waited for the customary permission to come in, and finding the silence still continued, after she had laid the paper on the table, and there was absolutely nothing for silence to give consent to, like a woman of character, resource, and decision, she determined to bring matters to an issue, with a point blank question of,—

"Please *um*—shall I bring candles?"

"If you please," said Mrs. Pemble, raising her head and drying her eyes hastily like a *strong-minded woman* as she was, who never liked to be caught either weeping or napping, though indeed, during the last three months, it would have been difficult to have surprised her doing the latter.

"And Sarah,"—added she, as that ubiquitous individual was closing the door,—"*Not to have the trouble of coming up again, you may bring tea when you bring the lights.*"

"Yes, *um*!—thank you, *um*!"

And again between the interlude of the darkness and the light, the occupant of the dull wainscoted parlour leant forward and covered her face with her hands; for indeed it would have been impossible to *lean back* in that three-cornered uneasy easy-chair,

and if the people were only half as upright as the furniture was, at the time of the great moralist, verily there could have been no backsliding in those days; but this time no tears trickled between the small white fingers that covered that poor wan face, for the *poor* must mind their sharp, stringent, economies in *all* things—even in their sorrow—the free indulgence of which is truly enough called “the luxury of woe,” and, consequently, is not for them; for grief, when given way to, to excess, stupifies and enervates quite as much as either alcohol or opiates; and as poverty *must* ever be up and *doing*, it cannot afford to sit pondering and ruining. And already, by the burning aching of her head, the poor mourner felt that for *that* day she had exceeded her pauper allowance of tribulation, and if she did not rouse herself and gird on her woman’s armour of moral courage, she should be fit for nothing the next; at least, not for toiling through muddy streets in quest of that most bitter of all things, the bread of dependence, which, bitter as it is, she almost began to despair of obtaining; perhaps she had been too honest in proclaiming her views and plan of education, which were calculated to make sensible, rational, useful and loveable WOMEN, and not ignorant, vain, selfish and frivolous “*Females*.” Moreover she had hitherto found that all the dry-salters, druggists and coach-makers’ “*ladies*” whose advertisements she had replied to, seemed to think there was something *fine* in having a governess, and evidently classed it in the same category as setting up a “foot boy” or a brougham, and did not at all consider the matter in an educational point of view, as it was quite clear that *she* was to have unlimited *responsibility*, and *no power*; and that, while polking, crocheting and screaming in defiance of nature, to a cruelly castigated piano were considered indispensable; morals, manners, general and solid information, with keeping the peace towards the Queen’s English and not calling it all sorts of horrible names, were reckoned of no account. And indeed *one* lady, (the drysalter’s,) Mrs. Pemble had almost shocked into a fit of apoplexy by betraying her very vulgar opinion *that every woman*—were she a King’s daughter—should be made a thorough good housewife, which, according to her notions, did not end with even an extensive culinary *savoir*, but should include *every* thing that the mother of a family *may* at some one time of her life *have* occasion to *do*, and always in every sphere *has* occasion to *know* how it should be done, from making a shirt to dressing a wound, and from being a visible providence in a sick room, instead of a visible nuisance. Now this, as we before said, so disgusted the aristocratic refinement of Mrs. Fitz Smugsby, (it used to be plain Smugsby when they lived in Whitechapel, but now, as she herself said, they had a *willer* in the *Regency Park*; Smugsby did not seem to go with it,) that she could scarcely rise from the sofa, (which she filled like an additional squab covered with claret-coloured velvet and point cuffs and a large assortment

of jewellery, though only eleven o'clock in the forenoon,) but when at length she *had* risen, she waved one very large well-fed hand towards the door saying, with great dignity and a backward toss of her head that—

"She wanted something much *genteeler* for her daughters, as Mr. Fitz Smugsbys being able to give them £50,000 each to their *fortin*, was one of the *peticklest* men that *hever* lived about *eddication*, and didn't *begrudge nothink*, so as they was but made *up to the mark* with the rest of the *harrystocracy*; and therefore, of course he did not want them made into 'ousehold drudges, which was all very well for farmers' daughters and *such like*!"

This oration finished, she grasped the bell, adding:

"Hi'm sorry *as* you've *ad* the trouble to come, *has* Hi see you wouldn't suit *my establishment* at all; but my *butler* shall shew you *hout* and stop a 'bus for you *hif* you *ave fur* to go."

The so-called *butler*, with whom nature appeared to have been in a hurry, and rolled into the breadth what should have been in the length, and then in order to laugh off the mistake had played a game of cribbage over his very broad pock-marked face, now made his appearance, inducting himself into a grass-green *livery* with yellow facings and shoulder knots, which looked like wreaths of daffadowndillies.

"Orricks," (the Parish Register wrote it Horricks,) "shew this *pusson hout*, hand tell *Enry* to tell *Oppner* to tell one of the *hunder footmen*, to stop a 'bus;"—and, with another majestic wave of the hand, this ambulating dome of St. Paul's in claret velvet bowed the *governess* out.

And truly, so comparative a thing *is* happiness, and so many degrees are there in the comparison, that, wet and weary in body and mind as she was, the gloomy wainscoted parlour, the badly dressed fat mutton chop, and even the blunt blackhandled knives and the slipshod, clumsy, but ever civil and obliging "Sarah Nash," each and all appeared so many sybarite luxuries to Mrs. Pemble, compared with the chance of having been domiciled from night till morning and morning till night with Mrs. and the Miss Fitz Smugsbys; and in thinking over all this, and wondering how many *more* Mrs. Fitz Smugsbys she would have to encounter before she could obtain the munificent sum of £30 a year, she did not perceive that it was full half an hour before Sarah returned with the lights and the tea. When the latter did so, it was with an apology for the delay as she placed them on the table, saying:

"I'm sorry to have *kep* you so long, *um*, but as you eat no dinner I thought as you'd be *a'most* starved, so I went and got you a Sally Lunn; but Missus is such a skinflint that there *aint never* a bit of fire to do *nothink*, and that's the reason as I've been so long a trying over that tea-spoonful of fire to toast this here cake; but, as Mr. Phippen says, and goodness knows it is a true saying, a

long as Mrs. Pike can only *do the lodgers brown* that's all *she* cares for. Now *do 'um*, try and eat it, for I think I managed to toast it pretty tidily after all; for as she's off to the play with one of them there free admissions I did manage to get a few lumps of coal out of her scuttle." And with this confession Sarah uncovered the cake, with a little air of conscious triumph, which its beautifully brown, hot and crisp appearance fully justified.

"It does indeed look excellent, Sarah, and thank you a thousand times for thinking of it," said Mrs. Pemble, helping herself to a piece of it with a well-acted alacrity, which she felt would be the best thanks she could offer to the amiable forethought of Sarah, and as she did so, the tears came again into her eyes; for none feel little attentions so sensibly as those who have no one to care for them, for there is about these *alms* of itinerant kindness a sort of palpable GOD-SENT air, which not only enhances but sanctifies them; and never does the poor solitary wayfarer in the flinty highway, or the thorny bye-ways of life meet with one of these little pure and simple heart flowers peeping out from the surrounding ruggedness without thinking what the wise Theognis asserted—

"Oh! in this world how many are there whose vices are concealed by wealth, and how many more whose virtues are concealed by poverty!"

Concealed, yes, from the mass; but as science possesses the sacred and mysterious secret of detecting and extracting poisons however subtle and latent, from the most cautiously concealed and foully obstructed sources, so is there an equally infallible analytic power in finely organized natures which enables them to discover in others even the very smallest scintilla of the sacred fire of that better world, which an undue weight of the mire and moil of this one may and does obscure, but never can (where once it has been given) totally extinguish.

And as that poor drudge of all work left the room with her stiff new check-apron, (always put on clean to come up to "the lady,") and the latter turned her eyes from its wearer to her little offering, Mrs. Pemble doubted if the most costly brocade upon the loveliest of wearers could have "snatched a grace beyond the reach of art," as that stiff check-apron of the kind-hearted Sarah Nash had done; for there is *one* great and surpassing advantage that the kind acts of the poor and lowly must always have over those of the high and the mighty, for in such matters the poor and lowly do *all* they can to help or to serve; but who ever yet heard of a rich man pushing his benevolence to such an unlimited liability of extent? And truly it was *not* the costliness of the poor Magdalene's spikenard, nor that of the alabaster box that contained it, which found favour in the eyes of the Saviour; but to use His own blessed and gracious words, it was that "*she had done what she could!*"

All this had scarcely passed through Mrs. Pemble's mind before Sarah returned to ask her if she had not better have a fire, as it

was very damp and chilly. But fires cost money, and therefore cold, whether in hearts or hearths, *must* be borne by all the pupils of poverty, such being one of the very first hard lessons in her horn-book; and so with a slight shiver Mrs. Pemble said:

"No thank you, Sarah, I shall be going to bed soon; but if you will have the goodness to bring me my old Indian shawl out of the next room I'll put it on; it is on the chair near the window."

"Your cake is delicious, Sarah, and so nicely toasted, only that I am not very well I should have eaten it all, but you must eat the rest, and here is some tea for you to take with it," added Mrs. Pemble, filling a large cup out of the tea-chest and another of sugar.

"*Lawr!* that will last me a week. Oh! thank you, *um;*" and Sarah retreated with her prize in a high state of gratitude; for decidedly *next* to green apples, fortune-tellers and policemen, tea and sugar are the royal roads to the hearts of English maidservants, be they of all-work or of no-work.

No sooner had Mrs. Pemble wrapped herself in the comfortable and downy folds of the soft old cashmere, and snuffed the candles, than she unfurled *The Times*, and after having first devoured the Crimean news, which nevertheless she always, though so eager to know it, delayed with a sort of sickening incertitude from approaching, lest there might have been a battle, and that battle should have made her, with many thousands more, childless. After having also read the irrefragable announcement that "A Newfoundland dog has teeth!" the interesting one to those whom it might concern, that "the Admiral is quite well!" and the sentimental one that "Walter wronged Viola, as she had never entertained one unkind thought of *him!*" which certainly would not have been very entertaining to Walter if she had; she next glanced, more in sorrow than with envy, over the list of those few-and-far-between individuals who, thanks to philanthropic solicitors in invoking the aid of defunct or departing parish clerks and their inedited manuscripts, are always hearing of "something to their advantage!" but poor Mrs. Pemble being perfectly aware from long experience that *she* was not in the most distant manner related to that distinguished family which holds such advantageous audits, she was about to lay down the paper and light her hand-candle, when her attention was arrested by the following ADVERTISEMENT:—

"Wanted, a Governess, not at £20 a year but at £100. She *must* be a *gentlewoman*, a married woman or widow who has herself had children preferred, or rather indispensable, as no Miss in her teens, or just out of them need apply. She must be a sincere, that is, a practical *daily* and *hourly* CHRISTIAN, neither Pharisaical High Church, nor Puritanical Low Church, and above all not belonging to any of the new-fangled *ites* or flights. Next to good morals she must have their *evidence*, good *manners*. For accomplishments, she must know sufficient of music, drawing and

dancing to be able to teach them with masters; but must be so good a linguist as to be able to teach at least French and Italian without masters, by constantly speaking them; for Spanish and German, masters will be allowed; Latin decidedly approved, and Greek by no means objected to; but above all, a thorough knowledge of *English* indispensable, as that language is daily becoming more rare. As the pupils are three in number, viz.:—two little girls, one fifteen and the other twelve, and a boy of seven, who will all be implicitly confided to the Governess's care and control; none but a sensible, good tempered, and good natured woman need apply; but all such, desiring the situation, and who think they can *conscientiously* fill it, will have the goodness to apply between the hours of twelve and three at Peele's Coffee-house on Monday, Thursday, and Saturday next, inquiring for 'Hunks.'"

"Well, at all events, Hunks, you are an original!" said Mrs. Pemble with a smile as she put down the paper; "yet there is something in your odd advertisement that I like amazingly; a bluff, vigorous terseness, in short, that is as refreshing as a blow upon the moors, and the fresh smell of the heather after the fetid Margate-steamer vulgarity of a Mrs. Fitz Smugsby; and such a frank honesty too in saying that the children are to be under the control as well as the care of the governess; so different from the *dividi et imperi* system of the dry-salters' '*ladies*,' and not only not objecting to, but wishing women to know Greek and Latin; in short, to acquire knowledge through every available portal. Oh! decidedly 'Hunks' you are a diamond, though it may be a rough one; there is evidently no masculine narrow-mindedness about you, or rather *all-graspingness*; none of the old Mosaic law so carefully carried on to and stringently insisted upon in the Christian dispensation, which has made men religiously accept as the one article of faith which they have *never* violated since the creation, that God made the world for *them*, and women and all the other inferior animals for their use or abuse, as their sovereign wills might decide. Well, I don't know Greek, I wish I did, nor German; but Latin, French, Italian and Spanish, I plead guilty to; and dear good Mr. 'Hunks,' I think I know what you mean by '*English*' being indispensable, having as great a horror as you can possibly have of the rapid way in which our noble language has degenerated within the last quarter of a century, since an exceedingly clever, but intensely vulgar set of writers have sprung up, who have not only endeavoured, but too well succeeded, in making the slip slop of their own very plebeian antecedents patent; I don't mean as to the stamp of currency which they have given to *slang*, for *that* every one knows to be base coin, and therefore only receives or passes it *as* such; but instead of the senate, the stage and the bar, which used to be considered as the standard sources from whence to derive the purest English, these gentry have changed the *venue* and taken it from the kitchen, the pot-house

and the hulks. But on the other hand, to arrogate to *one's self* the titles of a 'sensible, good-tempered, good-natured woman,' which are the credentials you require, my dear Mr. Hunks, for presenting one's self as a candidate for your approval, is really placing one in a very delicate and difficult position, by compelling one to put one's modesty in one's pocket. Well, when one has nothing else in it, as in *my* case, at all events it will be in roomy quarters."

With another smile at the conclusion of this soliloquy, Mrs. Pemble arose and lit her bed-room candle, with a genial ray stealing over and brightening her heart, more like that of hope than anything she had experienced since she had been the lonely tenant of these two gloomy rooms. And yet so difficult is it for a chronic misery to have faith in hope, that by the time she had unbound her hair, her heart had begun once more to journey downwards, and clasping her hands she said aloud :

"And if I should not suit this person, whoever he is, more than any of the others, what *am* I to do?"

When, as if at once to answer, to reprove, and to reassure her in one of those many mysterious ways, so consistent with what St. Augustine aptly calls "The severe mercy of God's discipline," her eye fell upon that precious little volume entitled "The Faithful Promiser," as it lay open upon her Bible on the toilet; it had opened at the thirteenth day, and she read it on to the end, beginning at the text:—

"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose. *Rom.* viii. 28.

"My soul! be still! thou art in the hands of thy Covenant God. Were these strange vicissitudes in thy history the result of accident or chance, thou mightest well be overwhelmed; but '*all things*,' and *this* thing (be it what it may) which is now disquieting thee, is *one* of those '*all things*' that are *so* working mysteriously for thy good. Trust thy God! He will not deceive thee, thy interests are with Him in safe custody. When sight says, 'all these things are against me,' let faith rebuke the hasty conclusion, and say, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' How often does God hedge up our way with thorns to elicit simple trust! How seldom can we *see* all things so working for our good! But it is better discipline to *believe* it. Oh! for faith amid frowning providences to say, 'I *know* that Thy judgments are good;' and relying in the dark to exclaim, 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!' Blessed Jesus, to thee are committed the reins of this universal empire. The same hand that was once nailed to the cross, is now wielding the sceptre on the throne, 'all power given unto Thee in heaven and in earth.' How can I doubt the wisdom, and faithfulness, and love of the most mysterious earthly dealing, when I know that the roll of providence is thus in the hands of Him who has

given the mightiest pledge Omnipotence *could* give of His tender interest in my soul's well-being, by giving Himself for me?

"REMEMBER THIS WORD UNTO THY SERVANT, UPON WHICH THOU HAST CAUSED ME TO HOPE!"

That night she prayed more fervently, that night she slept more calmly, for she had left with God the burden He had imposed. Oh! how much better and wiser was this than the earthly lullaby she had in vain tried the night before in these quaint old lines, which, though they well expressed her sorrows, were powerless to relieve them:—

"All things within my view,
All things that grow and thrive by nature's care,
My sorrows must renew;
For by successive change *they* better'd are;
But to *me* fortune still
Is therefore constant, 'cause she first was ill.

When shall my troubled years
Be to a verdant grave of flowers restor'd?
My injuries, my fears,
Too *little* merited, too *much* deplor'd!
When shall my just complaint
From equal heaven receive a full restraint?"

CHAPTER III.

THE OMNIBUS IN WHICH MR. PHIPPEN BOTH GOES OUT AND COMES OUT.

THERE were Saturday and Sunday to intervene before the portentous Monday, upon which Mrs. Pemble was to go upon her pilgrimage to Peele's coffee-house; she, however, resolved, if the writer of the advertisement she had read on the previous evening approved of her, to at once close with his (for these days of flint-skinning and stone-bleeding) munificent terms; and so, having for the present "set her fate upon" this "cast," she thought she would wait patiently "the hazard of the die," and not wear out her heart and her shoes in seeking for any other engagement—at least till Monday's budget should be known; and, indeed, not a little glad was she, to have one whole uninterrupted day, to once more open her work-box and put her wardrobe in order, for

"True as the needle to the pole"

is a true woman to her needle; and heterodox as the assertion may appear, there is *no* truer woman than she whom men brand as "*a strong-minded woman!*" for the poor strong-minded woman, more than any other, has the sense to feel that their "*strength is in sitting still,*" and with the world of wrongs heaped upon them, how would it be possible to do that, but for that real Pandora's box,

their work-box, which always has hope remaining in it; that hope which is the unfailing and obedient offspring of those who *work* and pray; and whether is it wiser in a mere worldly point of view to resort to pistols and balls of lead as your strong-minded (?) men so often do even to avoid the gaunt apparition of *one* great difficulty, or to take to that small polished weapon—a gold-eyed needle, and balls of cotton; and though compassed by a web of complex difficulties, whose every mesh is tied with a Gordian knot, sit calmly down to await the issue of GOD'S Providence, which men call "events," and which truly always *do* "cast their shadows before;" but they are not *always* dark ones; for as all good cometh from GOD, so the preceding shadows of good things, like His, are LIGHT; and as the occupant of that gloomy wainscoted-room sat in the hard three-cornered chair, stitching with nimble fingers, the crisp, clear clicking of her needle, making quiet music, as it were, to her thoughts; her heart felt, she knew not why, less heavy and more calm than it had done for weeks; but the next morning told her why, as the early post brought her a long and cheerful letter from Harcourt, filled with love for her, and glowing descriptions of the unrivalled scenery of the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn, Constantinople, with its water-side palaces, and kiosks, the night entrance into the Black Sea, and the disembarkation of the troops at Varna, from whence the letter was written, and where from the "Banshee," Sir George Brown, with the Light Division of the 7th and 23rd Fusiliers, 19th and 33rd Foot, Connaught Rangers, and the Second Battalion of the Rifle Brigade (which was Harcourt's Regiment) had just landed; but the conclusion of this long and graphic letter, darkened all the joy its perusal had excited, for it ended with these words:—

"And so, dearest Mother, I hope we shall soon have an engagement of some sort, and as soon as I have sniffed *real* battle powder I shall be able to tell you what its perfume is like—not *Maréchal*, I fear, in *our* army; but one thing I can safely promise you, that be it of what description it may, it shall not leave *your* son *en mauvaise odeur*, even at the Horse Guards, where merit, at least military merit, like weeds in a neglected garden, requires to be *rank* before any notice is taken of it; not but what I hope yet to give a palpable refutation to *this* in my own 'august' (ahem! that is to be) person, and so far from denying my present hypothesis; enchanted shall I be to wind up with a *classical* quotation from Peter Pindar's ode to Sir Joseph Banks on the boiled fleas, and thunder in your pretty white ear—

'There goes, then, my hypothesis to II——!'

"Now, don't frown, Mother, as at this distance it is taking an unfair advantage of me; if I were near you you might slap my face and welcome, for hinting that word "unfit to mention to ears polite;" and I would prove myself a good Christian by turning

the other cheek to you ; and now, God bless you, my own dear Mother, and whatever you do, *don't* let that brave heart of yours run down, or you will be unworthy of being the mother of the hero I destine for your son, the future F. M., who knows ; for

'Tantum ævi longinquæ valet mutare vetustas.'

"There's a Virgilian lot for you, which God grant may be realised by your ever grateful and affectionate Son,

"HARCOURT."

But no chances of future glory can ever dazzle fear out of a Mother's heart ; and the tears of mingled joy, pride, and sorrow, fell fast from Mrs. Pemble's eyes as she closed her son's letter ; for, substituting the word "Mothers" for "Fathers," she thought of the wise Ancient's distinction between Peace and War : "In times of Peace, sons bury their mothers ; but in time of War, mothers bury their sons." And it was not till the last bell was ringing the people in to Morning Prayers that her thoughts were roused from dwelling upon this melancholy truth ; when, hastily putting Harcourt's letter into her pocket, she tied on her bonnet and wended her way to that solemn old Church, and never had mortal prayed more fervently within the sacred aisles of that old Church, whose grey walls even seem penetrated with the benevolent spirit made perfect, of that really great, because truly good man Sir Thomas More, and therefore are a fitting sanctuary for the "weary and heavy laden."

Notwithstanding that Mrs. Pemble had got far into the small hours that night, completing her voluminous packet to Harcourt, yet she was up by times on that, to her, eventful Monday morning,

"Big with the fate of Peele's coffee-house and Hunks ;"

and greatly did she astonish "Sarah Nash," when she brought up her solitary piece of dry toast at breakfast, by telling her to stop any half-past ten o'clock omnibus that might be bound for the city.

Common people decidedly differ from that diplomatic diagram, M. de Talleyrand, whose definition of language was that it was given us to *conceal* our thoughts ; as they labour under the vulgar error, that on the contrary it was given to us to express them ; and consequently never fail to use, or it may be, to abuse it, for that purpose ; and "Sarah Nash," being no exception to her plebeian peers upon this order, forthwith relieved her mind after the following fashion ; which so far resembled an epigram, that it *was* short though *not* particularly "elegantly turned :"

"Lawr, um ! I never *know'd* you to go in a 'bus afore, and I don't think you'll like it, for all sorts of riff-raff goes in them ere 'busses, and particular they city ones ; you better let me *fetch* you a cab."

"No thank you, Sarah ; the omnibus will do very well ;" or

must do, thought Mrs. Pemble with a sigh, as Sarah closed the door; for, as true historians, we are bound to confess that poor Mrs. Pemble—all “strong-minded woman” though she was—would rather have walked through five miles of mud than have gone in an omnibus; for such was her aristocratic fine ladyism, that, not being accustomed to what the *elegant* popular authors of the present day call “*ride*” in an omnibus, her rebellious olfactory nerves revolted at that *esprit de corps* which is so strong where a number of what Sarah Nash irreverently denominated “riff-raff,” are closely packed together; and had she been offered a choice of evils, she would have infinitely preferred being penned with a drove of poor innocent beeves or muttons at Smithfield; who if equally guiltless of soap and water, are also guiltless of strong waters. But not only was the way to Fleet Street a *terra incognita* to her, but *that money*, or rather the want of it, which is the root of all evil, and allows to the poor no feast but Barmacide ones, or at most to drain visionary nectar from Hope’s shadowy cup, reminded her, by its daily-increasing absence from her purse, that those two dragons—though perhaps Lord Carlisle might call them “well-conditioned dragons”—prudence and parsimony must supply its place; so, arming herself with a vinaigrette and a flat pocket *flacon* of eau de Cologne, being ready cloaked and bonnetted, not to lose time she took up her work, which we are sorry to be obliged to own (but trust to the reader’s honor that it will go no further) was neither vulgar crochet nor lady-like embroidery, though in both she excelled; but, oh! tell it not in Gath, and still less in Bath, was a stocking! a common open-worked, thin-thread stocking, which she was not exactly darning, but mending in the French way, with that congenial stocking stitch which defies detection from the original web, and thus “knitting up the ravelled,” not certainly *sleeve*, but hoe of care, with care, she sat patiently awaiting the arrival of the hearse for the “quick,” though decidedly not for the fast, which was to convey her to Fleet Street. Now this omnibus, whose ostensible destination was “the Bank,” was in the habit of stopping every morning regularly—Sundays of course excepted—at that particular door in Church Street to take up Mr. Phillip Phippen; and if it was not to the *minute* by his large golden warming-pan of a repeater which, like himself, was *never* wrong, he generally reversed their relative positions, and gave the driver a set down; but it was evident that he, Phillip Phippen, was the Cæsar of *that* vehicle, and to have the honor of carrying him and his fortunes, the conductors of it bore much as to delays and directions that they would not have brooked from others; for, though perfectly pyrotechnic in his explosions if they were half a minute behind time, yet he never hurried himself; more especially if there were other passengers in it when it called for him; for on those occasions he was fond of showing his conse-

quence by standing on the step of the hall door while that of the omnibus was yawning wide to receive him, and dallying with one of his ponderous beaver gloves, which, unlike a man in office, from its easy accessibility, might have been put on in half the time—its owner would, for the benefit of the auditors, deliver the following mandate :

“Sárah, Sárah Nash ! I may, or I may not, dine at home ; that being as uncertain as the state of the funds in time of war ; *but* (and this was his stereotyped jest, which he *never* omitted) I shall *certainly* be home to tea ; and therefore, as the gentleman in the play says, ‘ you may take my *ha’p’orth* of milk as usual, and let the cream accumulate ;’ and then, seeing a smile telegraphed from one passenger to another, and going a step beyond Cardinal de Retz, in not only thinking that “ *qui fait rire l’esprit est maître de cœur*, but *des contours* also, he would make a sudden charge into the omnibus, his gingham umbrella doing duty for a lance ; and, regardless of those nine points of the law which the occupants had in their favour, would poke them about to every point of the compass, with a “ Ahem ! beg pardon, ma’am ; allow me to pass.” But were the impediments *boots* and *paletôts* the umbrella alone officiated, and its owner uttered not a word. However, on this particular Monday morning there were no other passengers, therefore from Mr. Phippen’s unusually patient and polite deportment it was quite evident that one of two things had happened ; either that Sarah, with the communicativeness of her order, had informed him of the extraordinary event that “ the parlour was *hactually* a going by the ‘bus at last !” or that he, Mr. Phippen, who, from being old enough, ought certainly to have known better, had tampered with the hand-maiden’s discretion, and extorted this important fact from her in true inquisitorial style by putting her to the question—for not only had his hat received an additional brush, and the gingham been exchanged for a less voluminous silk umbrella, but there he stood patiently doing the cad’s office and holding open the door of the omnibus, accompanying the act with the still more unwonted query of—

“Sárah ! Sárah Nash ! anyone else coming ?”

Which Mrs. Pemble hearing, hurried out not to keep him waiting.

“Allow me, ma’am ?” said Mr. Phippen, waving aside the hack courtesy of the cad’s arm, and gallantly offering his own private hand to help her into the omnibus, uttering as he did so, a mysterious “remember !” over her shoulder to the driver, who replied,

“All right, sir !” as he flipped an imaginary fly off the near horse’s off ear.

“Got all you want, *um* ?” asked the considerate Sarah, looking through the dark vista as if to convince herself that not only was Mrs. Pemble really “*a-going*” by the ‘bus, but that the “parlour” and the “first floor” had actually met at last.

"Yes, everything, thank you, Sarah."

"Ho! Sáràh, Sáràh Nash; the lady has no umbrella."

"She han't got never a one, sir; least ways I've never *seed* none; but as she's going to *ride* she won't want one."

"Much *you* know about it, Sáràh Nash!" cried Mr. Phippen, making a formidable, though luckily only pantomimic, attempt to unfurl his own marquee, "much *you* know about it; but *I*, being an old omnibus martyr, know that an umbrella is absolutely *the* one thing needful against those women in black gowns and red shawls, with what they call '*babbies*,' and who infest these vehicles more than any other nuisance. Astronomers may like this *via lacte*, but I can't say that *I do*, more especially if *gemini* is in the ascendant. Nevertheless, as the gentleman in the play says, 'you may take my *ha'p'orth* of milk as usual, Sáràh Nash, and let the cream accumulate;" and having discharged this joke for the second time that morning, for Mrs. Pemble's especial edification, flattering himself that however familiar (even to engendering contempt, it might be) to "Sáràh Nash" and the omnibus men, it would have all the freshness and sheen of a vestal quip and crank to her. He added, flipping the fingers of his left-hand glove (which he still grasped un-put-on) almost into the eyes of that "listening slave" the cad:

"Now tell the coachman to drive on, which does not mean that he is to *stop* every five minutes."

As soon as they were fairly off, Mrs. Pemble said:

"I am very happy to have an opportunity of thanking you, sir, for your kindness in letting me see *The Times*, for I quite live upon those admirable letters of Mr. Russell's from the Crimea."

"Friends out there, eh, ma'am?"

"A son—an only son."

And from the tremulous voice and the tearful eyes with which these words were uttered, no one would ever have supposed the speaker to be "a strong-minded woman."

"Tut, tut, tut, God bless my soul! army or navy, ma'am?"

"Army."

"'Hope I don't intrude,' as Paul Pry says; but may I ask in what regiment? I don't do so out of any impertinent curiosity; but though I haven't a shadow of what's called interest, and I thank God for it, either at the Horse Guards—which should be called what it *is*, the Ass Guards—or with lords and dukes or any other big wigs, yet we plain city men—old codgers, I suppose you would call us, sometimes have *that* which can make the magnates dance to any tune we please; and if it ever fell in my way to do this young fellow a good turn, I should be glad to do it; and he *must* be very young to be your son."

"Oh! sir, how can I thank you?" said Mrs. Pemble, her mother's heart opening so wide at the idea of anything being done

for Harcourt, that Phillip Phippen might have walked into its innermost recesses, bay-wig, Hessians, umbrella, and all, and taken possession.

"Well, my good lady, not for *nothing*, certainly. Wait, wait, at all events," said he, "till you have something to thank for;" and, taking from a side-pocket a large black leather pocket-book, with a solid, but perfectly plain gold pencil-case, he added, fixing his very sagacious-looking brown eyes upon her—

"Name of regiment?"

"Rifle Brigade attached, now at Varna," which he jotted down in his memorandum-book after her; and when he had done so, without raising his eyes, said, "Christian name?"

"Harcourt."

"Harcourt—Pemble?"

"Oh! no, no," hesitated Mrs. Pemble.

"Pemble not the name, eh? Just like them servants—beyond Smith, Jones, or Thompson!—never *can* get a name correctly; but I'm *positive* Pemble was the name Sarah Nash told me."

For a moment Mrs. Pemble hid her face (which was perfectly crimson) in her handkerchief. Oh! what a price, thought she, must one pay for a comparatively innocent untruth. At length she stammered out—

"You have been so kind, so very kind, in saying you would be glad to serve my poor boy, that I will tell you the exact truth."

"Hope so, ma'am; and indeed it's what I expect from you, or I have been greatly deceived in you, which I never was but in *one* woman, who was very near being Mrs. P. However, she was not, so there's no harm done. You were saying, ma'am—beg pardon for interrupting you?"

"That I will own to you the exact truth of my cruel position. You see, my son is in the profession of a gentleman, and"—

"Aye, all well," broke in Mr. Phippen, "if his performances are those of a gentleman also."

"That they *will* be so, I think I can answer for," rejoined the mother, with a little air of offended dignity at the doubt which this hope implied. "But as my son is a gentleman, both by the accident of birth and the carefully-studied intent of his education, and yet from a combination of untoward circumstances I am obliged to earn my bread—in short, to be a governess; and knowing, as I do, the utter and insurmountable hollowness and heartlessness of our national conventionalities, I do not like in any way to jeopard my poor boy's worldly interest by struggling for a subsistence under my own name. In any country but England, the heroic courage of the son would derive at least additional interest from the stoical courage of the mother; but in England (where respectability means wealth, and honor, success), I know and feel that my personal exertions to obtain an honest independence

would only serve as an extinguisher for my son, however brilliant his achievements might be."

"Wrong, ma'am, wrong; no honest woman nor no honest man, with the whole world, great and small, for spectators, need ever—at least *ought* ever—be ashamed of doing what is right," flattered Mr. Phippen, blowing his nose vehemently with a large and very gorgeous Indian silk handkerchief—so vehemently, that it almost appeared as if he harboured the ferocious design of pulling it off, which, to say the least of it, would have been a very ill-advised measure, seeing what an important feature it was in his face.

"Ah! no; no honest *man* need," sighed the widow; "for with all others, *even* the path of honesty is open to men, and they at least may follow it with impunity, or with no other inconvenience than that of being thought oddities for choosing a path so little frequented and with so few fine prospects."

"Well, 'egad, there is some truth in that; but the reason is obvious: any virtue in a moderate degree is easily credited, but when it exceeds but a quarter of a virtue—the common boundary and customary tariff—it is generally construed into some vice or selfish motive by the mass, who cannot understand, and consequently cannot believe what is so far above their own feelings and capabilities; but a mind truly firm and noble, radiates a self-approbation which far exceeds all the farthing rushlight illuminations which popularity, that tinsel of fools and knaves, can bestow. But hang your *timid* virtues, say I, for they do all the dirty work of villains in this world, as the injustice and oppression that should arouse them, always discourages them, and they would rather forego the honor of doing right, and the luxury of doing good, than expose *SELF* to the slightest risk, even to that of an erroneous imputation. On the other hand, seeing what an ugly, slippery mosaic of treacheries, lies, selfishness, meanness, and ingratitude this trumpery little world of ours is, I don't so much wonder at people 'bearing the ills they have'—that is, the weight of their own concentrated selfishness—rather 'than fly to others that they know not of;' and therefore, ma'am, I don't want to take your confidence by storm, though I should be very happy to be your friend; but then, again, except on the stage—and that's the reason I'm so fond of going to the play—because now-a-days it's only on the stage one ever hears a right thing said, or sees a right thing done; but then, to be sure, like the world, one knows it's all a sham. But what I was going to say was, that if I had the honor of being an old friend of yours—no doubt you have seen enough of life to think as I do, that friendship is a very dignified virtue, which in theory, at least, we all reverence, but that in friendship, as in religion, mere theory is too often substituted for practice. Therefore, as I before said, ma'am, pray don't let me force your confidence."

"Indeed, sir, you do *not* force it, for every word you say makes me more inclined to open my whole heart to you ; and I think if you could see into it, you would acknowledge that the fault of this subterfuge of a feigned name does not rest entirely with me. Neither does it arise altogether from fear of that hugbear, 'the world,' for whose opinions, to tell you the truth, I care very little, beyond not wantonly treading on the gouty feet of any of its prejudices, however absurd ; but what I do dread, is the evil influences that both his father's and my own relations might exercise against my son, were their mean pride to be wounded by my subordinate position, although towards him or his mother they have never acknowledged their kinship by giving him as much as a scolding or a spelling-book."

"Wh—ew ! relations, indeed !—relations be d——d ! beg pardon, ma'am, but for the most part, relations are either knaves or fools ; or by way of variation, sometimes an equal amalgamation of both ; my advice to every one starting in life would be, make as many *friends* as you can ; and however small your habitation may be, depend upon it there will be plenty of room for them ; but as for relations, the sooner you comb them all out, as you ladies do the fleas out of your lap-dogs, the better, and on the same principle ; for 'egad, it's the only way to keep one's self free from irritation, ma'am. Relations, indeed ! the worst vermin one can be troubled with, and of the rat species, too, for mark how the varlets always desert you when the ship is sinking. Break your neck, starve, drown, die in a ditch, and welcome ; but don't in your old shoes walk through a puddle, because you may chance to splash your relations' smart, white, silk stockings ; and worse still, if you get such a rise in the state that you come to be hanged : not, indeed, on account of the unpleasant sensation to yourself, as that such an accident also tends to suspend *their* credit in the world. However, life would be insipid, nor indeed could human nature support itself upon solid realities alone, did not imagination with her magic wand enlarge our sphere of enjoyments ; and it is for this reason, I have no doubt, that rich relations always *fancy* that poor ones, who have *nothing*, may, with 'prudence' and 'economy,' soon double that capital ; as indeed they may by getting into debt, which immoral proceeding gives the highly conscientious rich relations an *honorable* motive, no *excuse*, for being inhuman, and *that* is all they want ; for ugly vices, like ugly women, can always pass muster, and be graciously received in the world if only well dressed."

"At all events, I can endorse the truth of every word you say about relations," rejoined Mrs. Pemble ; "but I do think that in the whole arsenal of misfortune *the* most cruel and destructive strategy of fate is a false position."

"Right, ma'am ; for false positions may truly be called the calumnies of misfortune."

"And like all other calumnies," sighed the widow, "their harpy contact contaminates all they touch."

"Only for a time, ma'am, only for a time; for the great chemist up above, who inhabiteth eternity, never fails to apply his wondrous test of TRUTH to detect the poison at last. Bless me! I see we shall soon be in Fleet Street. Can I be of any service in escorting you back, ma'am? for Monday is almost a *dies non* with me."

"You are very kind, and I am *exceedingly* obliged to you; but as it is uncertain how long I may be detained, I will not trespass further on your kindness to-day; be—but—" and she hesitated for a moment, and then added—"as you were so *very* good as to say that you would, if an opportunity offered, interest yourself about my son, I will, if you will allow me, write his real name in your pocket-book?"

Which Mr. Phippen having handed to her with the pencil, she wrote it with a slight degree of tremulousness, not generally perceptible in her firm, bold hand, and gave it back to him.

"Harcourt! the d——!" muttered he, but quickly closing the book and transferring it to his pocket, he added, "I shall not forget my promise; but pray, ma'am, did you ever happen to know a person of that name, formerly in the 14th Light Dragoons, whose christian name was Andover?"

"He was my husband."

"*Was*. Then I presume you are a bond-woman no longer, but a freed woman, commonly called a widow?"

"I have been a widow nearly eight years."

"Then, ma'am, I respect you," said Mr. Phippen, holding out his hand, which Mrs. Pemble took, saying with a wan smile—

"What! for being a widow?"

"No, ma'am, but for continuing to be one."

Here the omnibus suddenly stopped; and upon the door being opened, Mr. Phippen sprang out, and with a hasty "good day, ma'am," took his umbrella under his arm, and marched majestically up Fleet Street.

"How much is it?" asked Mrs. Pemble of the man.

"Oh! the gemmen *have* paid, he took the whole 'bus, as there shouldn't be no *babbies*; he makes more fuss about the babbies than about the Rooshuns. He's a queer cove, he is; but he always do *everythink* very genteel—all right, marm;" and with this, he handed Mrs. Pemble a little Turkish bag, which she had left in the omnibus.

CHAPTER IV.

HUNKS.

HAVING inquired the whereabouts of Peele's coffee-house, Mrs. Pemble proceeded thither, not a little nervous at going to a place of the sort, and troubled moreover with sundry misgivings, that perhaps after all, from the signature of "Hunks," the advertisement might be a hoax; yet, no, the wording was too genuine, honest and straightforward for that; an original the writer might be, but *she* liked originals, they were generally sterling characters and had kind hearts; a case in point was that Mr. Phippen she had just left, an evident oddity; but what a kind good nature, for had he not promised to interest himself about Harcourt? For her part she hated those characters *of* and *for* the million, who, like the misfitting coats for the poor soldiers during the Peninsular War, seemed all cut out by wholesale from the same model, without reference to the diversity of dimensions for which they were intended. And with these and similar reflections, she reached the place of *rendezvous*. Not liking to risk the ridicule of a hoax, or incur a jest with a waiter by asking for "Hunks," she had copied the conclusion of the advertisement in order to place it in the hands of whoever she might see; merely saying that she had come about that advertisement. Accordingly, there stood a waiter already in the door-way, to receive her or any one else's communications. There is no use in describing him, for *all* waiters have the same likeness of genus that all terriers, or mastiffs, or monkeys have, only differing in degree; save that with the quadrupeds the chief characteristic is in the tail, whereas with bipeds it is in the head, and there is an elaborate making the most of it about the heads of all waiters, however lank and limp the rest of their bodies may be, that bears a striking analogy to the dilations of soda-water and champagne corks, which rise above the iron restraints the tyranny of custom has imposed upon them, and swelling with the effervescing aspirings of the pent-up spirit within, nobly make head against the pressure from without; consequently the head and the napkin constitute the idiosyncrasies of the waiter; the latter being invariably worn where the inhabitants of the moon are said to carry their heads, viz.: under their arm. Next to the waiter's head come his feet; there may indeed be, and most probably is

"Some short intermediate degree

"Tween the head and the heels, some small space
Like that between dinner and tea."

But next to the head, the feet are the most remarkable points

about the waiter, not so much in themselves as on account of the extraordinary kind of leather or prunella nondescript *chausseurs* into which they are always inducted, which seem only half a shoe, and yet not quite a slipper; and though they have all the *abandon* and *laissez aller* of the latter, they sometimes miraculously contrive to achieve all the creaking clamour of the former. Now, to the head and feet standing at the door of the coffee-house, Mrs. Pemble presented her paper, adding—

“I have come in answer to this advertisement; is the gentleman here?”

Whereupon removing the napkin from under his arm and glancing over the paper, he bowed very civilly, saying—

“He is, ma’am; be so good as to walk this way,—and you will avoid the coffee-room, as the gentleman is in a private room.”

And with a beating heart she followed her conductor down a passage, at the end of which he threw open the door of a small room, merely saying—

“A lady, sir,—about the advertisement in *‘The Times.’*”

“Oh! beg of her to walk in?” said an exceedingly benevolent looking man of about seventy, with a sort of loose, rather than slovenly, military dandyism about him, such as distinguished the heroes of the Wellington campaigns, for he wore a loose black silk cravat, over which his shirt collar fell limply, and still retained the old broad shirt frill, not however worn ostentatiously, but peeping out like a bunch of white lilies from between a sort of military under white kerseymere waistcoat; the lapels of his dark blue surtout coat thrown back, his only ornaments being the exceedingly fine texture and dazzling whiteness of his linen and the solid gold of his waistcoat and shirt buttons; his hair, though now perfectly white and giving the effect of powder, judging from his eyes and eye-brows, must originally have been dark; his tall, erect figure and military air, coupled with his shrewd keen eye, open countenance, and peculiarly benevolent smile, gave him the air not so much of one used to command as of one accustomed to be obeyed. The very first glance of this unmistakeable GENTLEMAN, coupled with his deep mellow and particularly sweet voice, quite re-assured Mrs. Pemble, at whose entrance he had risen from the easy chair in which he had been reading the paper, and himself handing her a seat after bowing to her with as much respect as if she had been a princess, said, with a quiet smile and his slow quiet voice, which he never either raised or hurried even when uttering the keenest sarcasms:

“Madam,—for want of a better master of the ceremonies, I must introduce myself as the ‘Hunks’ of *The Times*, though I hope not a *Hunks of the present times*, the one great characteristic of which is meanness—beginning with pecuniary meanness, and branching off into every other sort. I owe you not only an apology, but also an explanation for having brought a lady to a

coffee-house; but I am only a bird of passage in London, and could not very well appoint you to meet me at the United Service Club. I might certainly have done so at Mivart's Hotel, where I am stopping, but I thought if I made *that* the place of *rendezvous* I should be inundated with Misses, or '*parties*,' as they would most probably call themselves, in reply to my advertisement; whereas I was perfectly convinced that to an advertisement signed 'Hunks,' and dated Peele's Coffee-house, none but a really sensible woman would have the courage (which always includes conscience) to reply. You will pardon me, I hope Madam, for putting you through a little verbal exercise, as the young people for whom I wish to enlist your services are orphans, and my grandchildren; and I grieve to say they have had a succession of governesses who, having taken high degrees in the current vulgarisms of the day, have infected them; and as I am determined to disinfect them before it is too late, I have resolved not to engage any one who has graduated in this school; and it is for this reason that I require a lady not only to know Latin, but who has learnt English classically, as I prefer Dryden's English to Mr. Dickens's; and I wish her moreover to be thoroughly acquainted with the standard literature of her country, by which I don't mean the *puffular* authors of the present day, though my tariff includes some of the deservedly popular, who will live long after the puffs are blown out."

As he spoke he took a pencil and some tablets from his waistcoat-pocket, and then added—

"I hope I have not been the means of bringing you from a very great distance?"

"I am staying at Chelsea; but the distance was nothing to me, as I came in an omnibus."

"You——?" and here her interlocutor turned his right ear slightly towards her, as if he had not quite caught the conclusion of her reply.

"I came in an omnibus," she repeated.

"Right!" said her companion, and noting something on his tablets, then added:—

"I suppose you do not happen to have any of your sketches with you that I could see?"

"No, I have not, but if it were not detaining you too long, I could return and get them or bring them to-morrow."

"Right!" again. "Now do you know why I have twice said right to your answers, to the only two questions I have yet asked you?"

"No, I really do not."

"Well, I'll tell you; because you said you *came* in an omnibus; had you said you had *ridden* in one, I should have got up, opened the door, and begged you to *ride* back whenever you pleased; and when I asked you if you had any of your sketches

with you, which I only did as another decoy, you did not say, as a housemaid or any modern literary lion might have done, that you could '*fetch*' them, but that you could bring or get them."

"Oh! sir," said Mrs. Pemble, "it is a great pleasure to me to hear that *you* have as strong an objection to all these kitchen exotics made patent by modern literature as I have, and perhaps it will save you both time and trouble, if I give you a short *catalogue raisonné* of all my favourite aversions in this way."

"The *very* thing I should like, Madam."

"Well, '*such like*,' '*the like*,' '*be grudge!*' '*please*,' for if you please; '*a deal*,' for a great deal; '*a many*,' for many; some '*parties*' object, for some persons object; and worse still, '*a party*' called, instead of a person called; '*ride*,' for drive; '*fetch*' for get, go for, or bring; except when used in reference to poodles and pointers, who *do* '*fetch and carry*;' 'I'm not going to! and I don't intend to!' or 'I shan't be able to,' for I don't intend to do so, &c., &c. '*Sewing*' applied indiscriminately to all kinds, or any sort of needlework; '*whotter is the matter?*' for what is the matter? or what on earth is the matter? '*just like* I did,' for that's exactly what I did; or if asked which of those two ladies was Mrs. B.? to reply as so many young ladies *elegantly* do—'Well, I *expect* it was the one in blue.' Now, expectation being strictly the property of the *future*, it is really dishonest to drive it back into the service of the past; then come '*very pleased*,' for '*very much pleased*;' with legions more slip-slop and endless mispronunciations, which I cannot now enumerate. It is true that Aristotle has laid it down—that one should think like the wise, but speak like the common people; but with the usual parsimonious retrenchments of the present day, people seem to have decapitated this axiom, and gone wild in carrying out the latter portion of it only."

"Hear! hear!" said her very attentive listener, knocking his pencil gently on the table, his eyes sparkling with sympathetic approbation; "I see we agree perfectly as to our wishing, if possible, to check the horrible St. Bartholomew that is going on with regard to our mother tongue: and now, madam, as your pupils will be left *entirely* under your control—a trust which, from the little I have seen of you, I think you appear to be *quite* worthy of,—I should like to have an outline of your plan of education."

This Mrs. Pemble gave him, entering into the minutest details, which she prefaced by telling him how much such homely notions had shocked the "*haristocratic*" susceptibilities of Mrs. Fitz-Smugsby and the other ladies of her calibre.

"Excellent! admirable!" said her auditor, when she had ceased speaking; "nothing can be better, and I see my own dreams about to be realized." "And now may I ask," added he, with the same low, harmonious voice and quiet smile, "as the Yankees say—where were you *raised*, Madam? for you appear to have literally been raised so much above par, that one is naturally anxious to

know; for I can safely say that it is not every day that one meets with so distinguished a person."

"Ah! Sir," said Mrs Pemble, with a very becoming because a very genuine blush, "your praises would, I fear, make me very vain if the truth of an old French maxim did not come to my assistance, and by raising my pride put down my vanity—'*si vous prenez le soin, et la peine, de valoir quelque chose; vous ne vous distinguerez jamais,*' says some old French author, whose name I forget."

You, at all events, will never convince any one of the truth of that assertion, Madam, being such a palpable refutation of it in your own person; but generally speaking, I believe it to be perfectly true; indeed everything now-a-days confirms its truth, when we have so many scoundrels in politics, and so many blackguards in literature, all playing into each other's hands, and having made of letters, which is nominally a republic, an oligarchy represented by a set of not only close but fearfully rotten boroughs, whose holders pass to the extensive ignorance of the novel-reading public, as profound and *original* geniuses, by being burglars to living authors, and resurrectionists to dead ones."

"Do you not think this degeneracy in literature, and above all in literary men, was most prophetically accounted for by Vicesimus Knox, when he said 'the depraved taste of readers is another cause of the degeneracy of writers. They who write for the public must gratify the taste of the public. In vain would be their compositions formed on the model of the best writers and regulated by the precepts of the most judicious critics, if they conform not to the popular caprice, and the mistaken judgment of the vulgar. In an age when the taste for reading is universal, many works contemptible both in design and execution, will be received by a certain class of readers with distinguished applause. The want of the merits of just reasoning and pure language is to the greater part, the half-learned and the ignorant, no objection. In truth, unconnected thought and superficial declamation are congenial to minds unaccustomed to accurate thinking, and insensible to the charms of finished excellence. Hence the writers of acknowledged abilities and learning have been known, when they aimed at popularity, to relinquish real excellence and adopt a false taste in opposition to their own judgment.'"

"True, Madam; and nothing can be more apposite than your quotation is to the present race of writers of fiction, and their Thames-water imitators; but how do you account for this false taste and mistaken judgment in the self-sufficing—not to say self-sufficient—Tritons of the literary fry, who do *not* court popularity because they think they can command it, and neither adopt nor invent a style, but excavate one? Look at Carlyle, for instance, who, barring his pantheistic spiritualism, whiffed through Göthe's left off meerschaums, might pass for an original thinker, especially

among those who have not been in the habit of importing their ideas, but do their own thinking in their immediate narrow circles, if it were not for that confounded old creaking, rusty, sixteenth-century style, which he has thought fit to take up, and of which to adopt its and his jargon, the *chiefest* abominations are the constant backslidings into paralytic, rheumatic, obsolete phrases, and *the like*. In his uncouth bearishness of manner and of style, the man mairus his own fame, and, instead of being chronicled in the archives of posterity, as Thomas Carlyle the historian, he stands a great chance, through his grotesque affectation, of pairing off with Jack the Giant Killer, as Carlyle the Flunkey Player! and those living in the year two thousand and fifty-six, may accept this as a prophecy, that some Herr Von Muddlebrains, from Leyden, in or about that year, will in joining an archæological pilgrimage to Chelsea, discover on the site of Cheney Row, amid innumerable clay pipe bowls, mummied gutta-percha-looking fragments, supposed to be the superficial or outside portion of that profound, but very abominable compound a German sausage; and the *débris* of divers stone vessels, impossible at that distance of time to decide whether they were the scattered descendants of beer or ink bottles. Professor Von Muddlebrains will, I say, in all probability, discover amid these ruins the following extract from a diary in the hand writing of the author of 'SARTOR RESARTUS,' which from the peculiar character of the writing will give rise to great disputes among the antiquaries, the majority stoutly maintaining it to be the fragment of a monkish legend, till the perusal of the following entry will at once end the dispute, and decide the authorship—by being what the gifted writer himself would have designated a most copious *era-compounding* vice-vigesimating and *manners-mawling* excerpt!

"April 1st, 1855.—It is a noticeable thing that I walked with my wife to Bath House to-day; our flunkey waiting on us with powder (!) and his long gold-headed cane, which this day he wears for the first time to outdo Mr. Dickens's foot-boy, who looks more of a lamplighter, printer's devil, or the like. My wife, mighty pleased, and I, on to Fudgester's to put my name down as one of a committee for receiving subscriptions for the descendant of a god-daughter of Dr. Busby's, who has in her possession *the* hat he wore in Charles the Second's presence, and the identical birch whereby he inoculated the boys with Greek, Latin, and a segment of grammar, the rod being the best authenticated relic of the two extremes; *palman qui meruit ferat*, the birch, or the like."

"Now, in old writers, there is an unction in this style, for whatever is natural in style or manner never offends; it is affectation alone which the palate of our taste always rejects, and it is very natural for a writer of the seventeenth century to tell us in the language of his day, that when Orodes was sitting at the marriage feast of his son Pacorus, and was sent by Surenas the

head of his enemy Crassus, that 'they melted gold and poured it into the mouth of the decollated head by way of *mockage*, as if they would in that way satiate his great and greedy thirst for it;' or when speaking of Cæsar leading young Juba, the king of Mauritania's son, captive to Rome, another old writer says: 'However, from his captivity he gained the benefit of having a Roman education, whereby he became one of the *learnedest* men of the age in which he lived;' we accept the assertion without stumbling over the wording. But when in the nineteenth century Mr. Thomas Carlyle belabours us with the '*beautifulest*' '*learnedest*' and '*antiquatedest*' terms he can excavate and '*the like*,' we resent being towed along after this obsolete fashion, and feel that he has passed the rubicon of affectation, and plunged into the ridiculous. A still more antiquated historian than these two I have just cited, in speaking of one of the Claudii, says with the greatest possible good faith, and all solemnity unwitting of the ludicrous: 'This Claudius was of that noble family, a *young gentleman* of great parts, and of a very bold and enterprising genius, but *excessive lewd*!'

"Now just fancy reading this fact, similarly *worded* in the pages of Macaulay!! But there can be no doubt that had Thomas Carlyle had anything to do with 'The Lays of Antient Rome,' he would, without scruple or remorse, have hatched just such another paragraph."

"Well," laughed Mrs. Pemble; "with no offence to the aboriginals, setting aside the matter, the manner is very Carlylean; but do you not also think that a certain class of *soi-disant* books for children, with nothing on earth in them but a set of *à propos de bottes* religious sentences, strung together on a long string of the most excruciating vulgarisms, have also (from the outrageous manner in which they are puffed, and consequently *sold*), done much to vitiate the taste and manners of the juvenile reading public?"

"Ah! *there* I so cordially agree with you, that I must answer you in four lines that Ponsard, in his fine play of Charlotte Corday, put into the mouth of Marat:—

'Je veux avec un soc, retourner les sillons,
A l'ombre les habits, au soleil les haillons,
Rangez vous grands seigneurs, laquais et valetaille,
Le peuple va passer, salut à la canaille!'

"Oui, c'est vraiment, bien le cas, de le dire," said Mrs. Pemble; "but to return to our own literati;—we must not include them all in one fell swoop, for many, whether in the depths of philosophy and science, or the sparkling surface of light literature, have acquired a just, and I should say enduring, fame. Now Thackeray, for instance—do you not admire his books? There is no clumsy journeyman exaggeration about them, no vulgarity, and they are so true to the hollow world that they describe, with yet a leaven

of human kindness running through them, which we feel is the author's own little bit of reality, making the fiction rise in proportion."

"I do admire Thackeray's books exceedingly, and formerly admired the man himself, but latterly, upon the two unerring principles of 'tell me your company, and I'll tell you what you are,' and 'who can touch pitch and not be defiled?' I certainly admire the man *less*, though not his works. But for Heaven's sake, don't ask me about the politico-literary tribe, and if you ask me no questions, as the children say, I will tell you no lies. There is one especial pair of literary-politico charlatans, whose ruthless inconsistencies have, as Lord Albemarle said of Lord Temple and George Grenville, bullied or bored almost every contemporary statesman. But this is, essentially, an age of *seeming* and of *shams*—in short, of humbug, in every walk of life; and there being more hard, stick-at-nothing, scientific, villany abroad than there ever was, in order to cover this adamantine substratum as they do chimney-pieces, with velvet, the reigning cant of the day is an affectation of uncommon softness and summer-morning mildness, and a *professed* aversion to all acts of cruelty, and still more to all violent language; but unfortunately this verbal millenium, which exacts that we should treat our foes with as much *apparent* respect as our friends, not only has degenerated into the *foulest hypocrisy*, but has driven the tide of popular sympathy into an inverse current, so that it generally flows for the *aggressor*, but seldom for the *victim*,—thus thanks to pseudo philosophers who wedge themselves among the leaden crudities of German materialism, till they have not a single feeling left, from each successively having flowed away in rhetorical small beer; or thanks to the still worse, because more immediately pernicious, influence of aspirants in the slippery arena of politics, who retail the plausible puerilities of a Brummagen philanthropy, which advocates the abolition of gibbets before it has discovered even an *abatement* for crime, and would fell the gallows tree but leave the gallows fruit, to constitute a hideous traffic in the mart of nations. We may poison either morally or physically as much as we please, the only unpardonable thing being the victims, or their friends *speaking* of such deeds in *strong language*. If a man ~~is~~ guilty of this '*bad taste*,' it is uncharitable; if a woman, it is unfeminine. Why, Madam, would you believe it, a short time ago a young ruffian was tried in my county for having *three* successive times administered arsenic to his poor old and most indulgent father, and the third time the parricide had nearly effected his revolting crime; the evidence against him was strong as that of Holy Writ, including the testimony of a celebrated chemist, and every one in court, beginning with the judge, thought that the wretch must pay the forfeit of his crime, when lo, the sapient jury electrified the court by bringing in a verdict of '*NOT GUILTY!*' The next day the fore-

man of the jury publicly declared that every one of them to a man, *knew* and *believed* the prisoner to be guilty, but that they did not like the idea of his being hanged, and so they brought him in 'NOT GUILTY!!' Their benevolence being such that they thought it better to let him loose upon society to accomplish the murder of his father, and God knows how many more, as it is a well authenticated *fact* in the statistics of crime, that poisoners always go on, one murder never sufficing them, for it is the dram-drinking of crime, the appetite for which 'grows upon what it feeds.' A dark portentous sign of the times truly, when her pretended friends take advantage of the bandage that is over the eyes of Justice, to blunt her sword and slip false weights into her scales, so that she metes out to the victim the punishment of the culprit, and to the criminal the impunity of innocence; but no wonder, when we have 'gifted authors' writing disgusting manuals of crime made easy that may serve as poisonings for the million, while the *cantabile* with which they accompany these revolting dramas, is the abolition of the gallows. But each man is the complex god of his own idolatry, and the high priest of his own altar; and therefore, as regards hanging,

They best can rail against it
Who deserve it most!

But I am forgetting all this time, Madam, that I asked you a question and never gave you time to answer it; being so exceedingly pleased with the little I have seen of you, I am naturally anxious to know the name of the lady whom I have the honor of addressing, and as many of her antecedents as she may choose to favour me with."

For a moment Mrs. Pemble hesitated, looked down and coloured to her temples, as she felt the kind but still scrutinizing glance of her companion fixed upon her; but at length summoning all her courage to do what she knew *must* be done, she said—

"Certainly, Sir, and even were my confidence not attracted towards you as it is, our relative positions demand that I should deal in every way candidly with you; I must, therefore, begin by making a confession, which I feel will prejudice you against me, and that is that I have hitherto sought to obtain an engagement under a feigned name."

Here her auditor looked a little disconcerted, and slightly knit his brows.

"But," continued she, having noticed both the expression and the movement, "as I have—that is—as I *think I may have*, a firm reliance upon your honor that whether you engage me or not, you will preserve my secret inviolate, as a gentleman, I will acquaint you with my real name, which may, perhaps, in some degree palliate my former subterfuge of assuming a name to which I have no right."

"Stop, Madam," interrupted he, taking a card-case from his pocket, and as he finished speaking, handing her one of his cards, "flattered as I am by your good opinion, before you bestow your confidence it is but fair that you should know on whom you do so; and as my very—I suppose your '*clever*' men would call it *mediocre* and *borné*—ambition has been merely to deserve to be considered that untelling, untrumpeted thing, AN HONEST MAN, I believe I have tolerably well achieved my little aim in the world, which I tell you not so much in the way of self-praise, which is always not only an odious, but a suspicious thing, as to re-assure you."

Mrs. Pemble glanced at the card, and with a deeper blush than had yet suffused her face, while the tears welled up into her eyes as she read—

General Sir Gregory Kempenfelt.

Baron's Court.

said, "Oh! Sir, how often I have heard my father speak of you, and in what terms!"

"Your father! pray, Madam, what is, or rather what was your maiden name?"

"Danvers," murmured Mrs. Pemble, covering her face with her handkerchief to stifle one or two hysterical sobs.

"God bless me! is it possible! *What* a daughter, or rather the daughter of my old friend Benbow Danvers?"

"Yes, he was my father, and when I tell you he never forgave my ill-fated marriage, and would not even see me on his death-bed, where I had no mother to stand between me and his anger, you may guess, Sir, that I have some reason to conceal my name."

"Ah, poor Ben! poor Ben! that confounded obstinacy which he misnomered firmness, was *his* ONE fault, but it was great enough to have made half a dozen large sized ones. Yes, yes, I heard all about your marriage, and only wished I had been in England instead of India at the time, or that poor Ben had not died before my return home; and though I have tried to find you out through every channel, to think I should never have succeeded; till lo! this lucky turn of Providence, which we err *materially* in calling chance, has at once brought about what all my efforts

failed to do; for that d——d flint of an uncle of yours, Melville Danvers, affected to have no suspicion where you were to be found, and as for your maternal uncle, Lord Dunnington, though I don't know him, I wrote to him, but *he* also was one of the *know nothings*! But come, my dear child," added he, taking her hand in the kindest manner, as he seated himself beside her, "now that I *have* found you, let me hear your whole history from yourself."

And accordingly, after a little more very natural emotion, Mrs. Pemble began at the beginning, and gave him her whole history since her marriage down to Harcourt's departure for the Crimea, dwelling very slightly both upon her own sacrifices and privations, and her husband's misconduct; for his sins had been more those of omission than of commission, as he had never personally brutalised or persecuted her; and after all, that is the Alpha and Omega of unpardonable marital sin with most women. In conclusion she put forward the same family reasons for her assumed name that she had previously given Mr. Phippen. For a few seconds after she had ceased speaking there was a profound silence, and Sir Gregory Kempensfelt seemed lost in thought.

"Ah! sir," said Mrs. Pemble, timidly, "I fear after what I have told you, you will not take me."

"Not, certainly, my dear, as a governess, but as I know no one who has taken such high and honorable degrees in the most severe but best of all training schools—that of misfortune, there is no one whom I should feel *so* glad to entrust my three treasures to, or so grateful for her care of them."

"Oh! only on *one* condition, my dear Sir Gregory, indeed, indeed, I cannot accept your kindness on any other, and that is, that I am *their* governess; nothing more, nor nothing less."

"What! you will not consent to be the honoured guest of your father's oldest friend."

"No, my dear Sir Gregory, I—I—will not, that is, I *cannot*; for guests neither do nor *can* perform conscientiously and respectably the duties of a governess."

"You are right, my dear; it shall be as you wish," said he, as if a thought had suddenly struck him, and he paused in the act of taking a pinch of snuff; "and *besides*, your incognita will be better preserved; I had nearly forgotten *that*; and no wonder, for you have not yet told me either your real name, or your *nom de guerre*."

"My *nom de grammaire* you should rather say; well, my governess name is Pemble, my real name Penrhyn."

"Ah! yes, I remember," said Sir Gregory, touching his forehead with the fore-finger of his right hand; "your husband was in some dragoon regiment, was he not?"

"Yes, the 14th Light Dragoons; I fear if his services had been longer or greater than a protracted peace ever affords an opportunity for, *they* would avail nought in favour of poor Harcourt;

there appears to be such terrible mismanagement in every way in the present war."

"Nay, for that matter, my dear, don't you know that the *present* times always miraculously unite the two apparently incompatible extremes, of being the best and the worst in the world; but really, not only is history always repeating itself in its broad outline of great events, but if any one had the patience to carefully read over the debates and foreign and domestic intelligence for the last two hundred years, he would be very apt to think that neither a man, a minister, nor a measure had been changed since then, so exactly does the very *wording* of these documents, even to the pasquinades of those times, fit and suit these; for instance, I have here in my pocket-book an extract from the *London Gazette* of 1790, describing the loss of 'the Royal George' at Spithead, the very ship in which *your* father served as a midshipman, and in which my poor uncle, Admiral Kempenfelt, lost his very valuable life in so provoking a manner. Not to bore you with the whole of it, just listen to the conclusion, with the cut at the government, and the rap over the knuckles for the Lords of the Admiralty, which would do admirably for an article in *The Times* of 1855, touching the Baltic Fleet. Here it is:—'The loss of the Royal George must be recent in the minds of every one, and affords a dreadful instance of the uncertainty of human life. At the time she foundered in Spithead the unfortunate Admiral Kempenfelt was shaving himself in the quarter gallery of his cabin. Many have been the conjectures on this extraordinary event, and the late Captain Martin Waghorn, who commanded her, was tried by a court martial, and most honorably acquitted. It appeared that the ship was upon the heel for the purpose of having her sides caulked and payed, when, without any previous alarm, she instantly went down! What went very much in favour of Captain Waghorn on his trial, was the following circumstance,—that at the time this devoted ship was undergoing a *fashionable* repair at Plymouth, her timbers were so very rotten that a common walking-cane penetrated her sides, so that there was not strength sufficient to fasten the ring-bolts. Such being (as it was) absolutely the case, it is but reasonable to apprehend that the guns on the weather side gave way, and consigned at least 800 souls to a premature grave! Humanity prompts me at this moment of my feeling to suggest the propriety of embarking at least the first Lord of the Admiralty, the Surveyor of the Navy, and the Master Shipwright of the King's yard in one of these *partially* repaired ships, for the *pleasure* of a month's cruise in the Bay of Biscay.

'NAUTICUS JUNIOR.'

"And some seven and twenty years prior to this, the news from Russia, and the speculations upon her policy touching Turkey and the Crimea, and the little reliance to be placed in her good faith as to concluding a peace with Great Britain, might be stereotyped as our Crimean news in 1855. Then again, I, as a young man, can

remember when the fever of the day was the moot point of some perverted or pervertible sentence of the King of Spain, in some knotty treaty of which the Brights and Cobdens of that day took one side, and 'the heaven-born minister' another; and then in the opposition journals we'd have this sort of barometer paragraphs: 'Labour'd dissertations have appeared in several newspapers, avowedly on the side of the Minister, explaining and proving the exclusive right of the Spaniards to Nootka Sound, and all the coast of North California. Wherefore is all this?

Quorsum hæc tam pulida tendunt?

Mr. Pitt, we sincerely believe, has more spirit as well as more sense, than to make peace with the Spaniards without some concession more marked, some sacrifice more substantial, than equivocal words in an equivocal manifesto. He will never expose himself to the interpretation that his adversaries would give to a mighty armament raised on the eve, nay, during the time, of a general election, but dispersed *re infecta* on the meeting of Parliament, to the observation that all that has yet been conceded by Spain, even without menaces of hostility, and, above all, to the direct contrast between his own tameness and the prudent firmness of our ally the King of Prussia, who has obtained one million six hundred thousand pounds sterling as an indemnification for those expensive preparations by which he enforced a pacification between Austria and the Porte, and maintained the balance of Europe.' It is true that we must now substitute Russia for Spain, our prudent ally Napoleon the Third for our *potational* ally the King of Prussia, and Lord Panmure for Mr. Pitt; but *au reste*, you see, our paper wars, at least, were always waged much after the same fashion, except that there is more strongly developed and perfectionised intellect in one column of the *Times* alone in 1855, than could have been extracted from the whole periodical press at the beginning of this century. But, not to take up more of your morning, which I have no doubt would be otherwise much better employed, I must now tell you about your pupils, who are, as I before told you, orphans;—they are the children of my poor daughter; for I, like your father, had but an only child, and though her mother died when she was but three years old, I never married again, for I never yet saw the woman whom I thought worthy of filling the place either in my heart or my home which she had filled so entirely and so admirably. Neither am I one of those who think it indispensable that landed property should go in the male line, and that girls should be brought up full of artificial wants and refinements with perfectly empty pockets, so that they generally either sink, or sell themselves to supply those wants; yet, on the other hand, considering the stagnant conventionality and the rampant vice of the *haute volée* of English society, an heiress is a sort of magazine of human gunpowder, running terrible

risks from every spark that comes in her way, and generally fired at last by the match of some designing plotter; however, there is but one security against such and all other contingencies, which is, to take every reasonable precaution and leave the issue to God. Being ordered with my regiment out to India in 1825, I left Linda, my daughter, in England to be educated; and as ten years after there was no chance of my immediate return home, I had her sent out to me, and, as she inherited both her mother's beauty (which had neither a fault nor an equal) and her loveable disposition, my affection and my pride were alike gratified. Far less beauty than my poor Linda possessed goes a great way in India, where admiration is plentiful and personal attractions rare, so that she soon became the reigning belle of Calcutta; and, as you may suppose, I was more fearful than anxious that she should marry; not that I had the slightest objection to her making the fortune as well as the happiness of even an honest subaltern, provided he was honest and every way worthy of her, and a gentleman by birth; but she did not keep me nor her numerous admirers long in suspense, for her choice soon fell upon the handsome and all-accomplished Charles Egerton (a son of Lord George Egerton), who was then on the Governor-General's staff, though he had nothing but his staff appointment; still, as Linda, as the heiress of Baron's Court, had enough for both, I never thought of making that an objection; and a finer young fellow in every way it was impossible to see anywhere, moreover exceedingly handsome, *ce que ne gâte rien*, as the French say; indeed, he possessed the very rare test of superiority—that of being an idol among women not preventing his unbounded popularity among men, under the title of 'THE BEST FELLOW IN THE WORLD!' Well, they were married, and for four years they were as happy as it is possible to be on this side the grave; but towards the beginning of the eighth year, that skeleton, which the Italians say is in every family, left its niche to wander through their elysium and cast its cold dark shadow across their threshold, for Linda had just made the discovery, and, what was even worse, Linda's father, that Charles Egerton was a gambler; and the reason this discovery had not been made sooner was, that he had hitherto been a successful one; but Fortune played him false at last, and on one fatal cast he lost £50,000; the winner was a plodding, money-scraping, almost money-coining Anglo-East-Indian, who had come out some ten years before as a writer, without (as the story went) having five pounds in his pocket, and was then one of the richest Nabobs in the Presidency, and on the eve of returning to England to become an East-India Director, which he has since done, and been made a baronet of besides, as baronets, like blackberries, have been plentiful of late years. Well, this personage kindly accepted a mortgage upon Baron's Court; in four years that mortgage must either be paid off or it will be foreclosed, and that is the reason I live entirely

in the country. Poor Egerton did *not* blow his brains out, which is generally the last act of the tragedy of the gamester; for nature was beforehand with him, by carrying him off in a brain fever; and that nothing might be wanting to complete the drama, my poor Linda died a month after in giving birth to a son, the little fellow who will be your third pupil, for, as he is now only seven, I wish to have a little Christian principle and human feeling ingrafted on his original nature before he goes to a public school to have Terence, Horace, Ovid, Sophocles, Æschylus, and other Greek and Latin immoralities and inhumanities flogged into him. His two sisters, Linda and May, are dear little things, with no organic faults of disposition, only a few superficial ones of manner and humour. Charley, too, I think, has an excellent heart, which his sisters, with their over-weening affection and giving way to him on all occasions, have done their uttermost to pervert, by turning him into an embryo Turk, as *his* will with *them* is law, and the only preventative yet discovered for this by the wisdom of the maids is, in its turn, making his tyranny the slave of his cowardice, for I am sorry to say he *is* a bit of a coward—an attribute he certainly does *not* inherit from the Kempenfelts, though he may do so from the dice-box—as his poor mother trembled at the whispering of the wind among the leaves for several months before he was born. You must know that my signature of *Hunks* to that advertisement in *The Times*, is a punishment to Master Charley; for, having refused to give him five shillings to buy a ship from the carpenter's boy, he for three days called me an 'Old Hunks;' I told him if he said that again I would advertise for a governess for him and his sisters under the signature of 'Hunks.' At first he laughed, and thought this a capital joke, but when he found it converted into 'a great fact,' and actually read it in print, he got into a dreadful state, as, from what I could make out through his sobs, it appears that his *idée fixe* is, that nothing less than an ogress *could* reply to an advertisement signed 'Hunks.'"

"Poor little fellow," said Mrs. Pemble, a smile on her lip, but the tears, which had gathered as she listened to the account of the ill-fated parents of these poor children, still trembling in her eyes.

"But," resumed Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, "I have not yet given you the whole of the *dramatis personæ* of Baron's Court, for though I am a single man I am not exactly without incumbrances, for I have a maiden sister living with me; which, indeed, I should be very glad if one could only induce her to put her temper out, instead of which, unfortunately, the least thing puts *her* out, so that she has nothing of charity but her name, which has long since distanced faith and hope—at least of any amendment; and what I fear is, that this moral Chili vinegar of their aunt Charity's may have a pernicious effect upon the tempers of May and Linda."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Pemble; "I think glaring defects

or vices, which affect, or rather militate against the happiness of others, if properly managed as *warnings*, serve as mithridates against their own poison."

"To a certain extent perhaps they do, but like the constant dropping of water on a stone, there is a fretting influence in ceaseless ill-temper that will at last wear through the most adamantine patience. But enough of the bane; now let us think of the antidote. So when, my dear Mrs. Pemble,—since Mrs. Pemble you are to be—can you conveniently come down to Baron's Court? which, by the bye, I forgot to tell you is in Flintshire, Mold being the post town. Would next Thursday be too soon for you? as that is the day I return home, and as the journey, even by the express train is rather a long one, I could (should that day suit you) have the pleasure of escorting you."

"You are very kind; Thursday will suit me perfectly, for as my poor Harcourt used to say, one of the advantages of having nothing, or perhaps the only advantage of that unincumbered estate is, that one is *always* in marching order. So, as I suppose you will go by the nine o'clock morning train, I will be at Euston Square a quarter before; and now, my dear Sir Gregory, before I wish you good morning, allow me to say what sincere pleasure this unexpected, nay quite romantic meeting with my father's oldest and best friend has given me; as his praises, I learnt almost with my creed, as a child. As for my gratitude for your most kind reception even before you knew who I was, the best way in which I can evince *that* will be by my unremitting devotion to your dear little grand-children."

"Come, come, my dear," said he, with a smile to hide the emotion that trembled in his voice, "you and I shall quarrel if you begin by talking of gratitude and those odious debtor and creditor benevolences which English people call "*claims*;" we have *all* claims, or *ought* to have upon one another, if we call ourselves Christians; the same claim that he "who fell among thieves" had upon the way-faring Samaritan."

Mary Penrhyn's heart had risen to her throat; so she could only press this fine old English gentleman's hand in silence, as she moved towards the door.

"Will you not allow me to see you home in a cab? Chelsea is a long way from this, and I don't like the idea of your going alone in an omnibus."

"No, my dear Sir Gregory, many thanks; but you had better not for my sake, for all the world don't know that I have so suddenly and strangely had the good fortune to find in you one of my father's oldest friends; and the people of this coffee-house *do* know that I came here to be hired as a governess; and as persons in your sphere of life, and still less in inferior ones, are not generally so considerate and well-bred to those poor educational pack-horses, your doing so might have an equivocal appearance."

"You are right, my dear, and I both accept and respect your objection, for decidedly in a woman discretion is the wisest part of virtue; but—but"—(and here this veteran hero of a thousand fights coloured like a young girl, as he took her hand and pressed within it a £20 note) "you remind me that I must begin and practise now to treat my friend Ben Danvers's daughter as my governess! and I have always found that in hurrying my governess off at a moment's notice, as I have done you, that they—that I—in short—that the engagement was not considered binding without a trifling advance of salary;—ha! ha! ha! you see I'm quite *au fait* to the business part of the transaction."

"Perhaps so, my dear, kind Sir Gregory, for I should think acts of kindness had been the business of your life; but, indeed, I am in no want of your present thoughtful generosity; if I were, it would be a pleasure and a privilege to be indebted to you."

"Well, it's very odd!" said he, with one of his joyous smiles, as, so delicately well-bred to force it on her acceptance he replaced the note in his waistcoat pocket, "it's very odd! but whenever I have received my pay at Cox and Greenwood's, though, 'egad, I have often overdrawn my account, I have never once thought of making them such a pretty speech on the occasion as you have just made me,—but never too old to learn,—so I have no doubt that I, as well as the children, shall improve in time. Waiter! show this lady out;—good morning, Madam," added he, with a profound bow, as he held the door open for "the governess" to pass.

A young poet of the present day has eloquently and truly said—

"Wherever there is beauty
There's a temple and a creed."

And what so beautiful as the incense of spontaneous prayer, rising from the living altar of a grateful heart to the uncreated light of God's Eternal Throne; and had she been kneeling in the most gorgeous fane ever erected by human hands, Mary Penrhyn could not have prayed more fervently than she did for some seconds, as she hurried along that densely crowded, bustling thoroughfare, nor have evoked sublimer vistas of the starry home of ransomed spirits, than she did through that smoky sky above her.

"For heaven reveals great mysteries
To truthful hearts and loving eyes;
To them each providence is clear,
Old things are new, the distant near,
The crooked straight, the darkest bright:
They walk by faith, and not by sight;"

and it was not till she was rudely jostled by a porter carrying an immense round hamper on his head, that she was recalled to earth; and then her joy, like all those flowers of paradise, which never can take deep root here below, began to be shaded off with a

tinge of regret, as she thought of the poor drudge, Sarah Nash, in that gloomy house in Church Street, who had been so kind to her when she had no one else to be so!—and that poor old Mr. Phippen, too, who had lent her the paper, and, above all, who had promised, if ever an opportunity should occur, to be of any service he could to Harcourt. She almost wished she could have taken them both with her, for it seemed actually ungrateful to go away and leave them in that gloomy house. For Sarah she could indeed buy a dress as a little memento of her gratitude, and she determined that it should be the very best French Merino that could be got; as, though poor Sarah had a silken heart, she did not think, though used to much dirty work, that as she was *not* a barrister, a silk gown would be either profitable or becoming to her. But Mr. Phippen—what *could* she give him? She could not afford anything very costly; and if she could, *he* was no dandy to be chained and ringed, or studded like a winter sky of a frosty night. Aye, “there was the rub!” and with this last thought pocket-handkerchiefs naturally suggested themselves; and so she decided upon getting him half-a-dozen voluminous Indian-silk ones and hemming them for him herself, in order to make *that* the excuse for so trifling a gift; and, having come to this important decision, she entered a shop in Fleet Street where we shall leave her to select her purchases; and will, with the reader’s permission, not being particularly fond of that *locale*, take a short stroll in a pleasanter part of the town; and, like Bruce, go in quest, not exactly of the source of the Nile, but of the Penrhyns; happy that, for once in her life at least, poor Mary Penrhyn had been **VERY SUCCESSFUL!**

CHAPTER V.

THE GREAT HOUSE.

“Oh! mystery of Man, from what a depth
Proceed thine honours!”

IN a fair suburb of the Modern Babylon, far west (where palaces rise on the one hand facing the verdant splendours of patriarchal trees on the other, whose regal branches, like sylvan kings, have bowed gracefully to all the beauties of the metropolis for the last three centuries, and whose branches, like a complex protocol, have diverted the *intente cordiale* of our somewhat uncertain sun from their complexions), might be distinguished one goodly edifice in particular, for it was even more vast than its neighbours, and the exotics that filled its large stone balconies like the hanging gardens of Ancient Babylon, embalmed the whole atmosphere of the causeway; so that pedestrian Cockneys plodding their way Notting-hillward, without any great stretch of imagination, might fancy that

e country had kindly come up to town to meet them, and escort them "a bit of the way." Over the portico of this great house were emblazoned some right royally supported arms surmounted by an Earl's coronet, whose stone strawberry leaves had a very imposing effect: and doubtless it is because anything in the shape of rank always imposes so much upon English people, that the English (who are too generous to allow themselves to be out-done) turn the compliment, and always impose so much upon anything in the shape of rank. But although the house in question belonged to a peer—in fact to my Lord Dunnington—yet it was not at this time occupied by its owner, having been let by him, or rather by his agent, to a millionaire Lancashire Baronet, a Sir taniferous Thompson; but greatness, even when greatly housed, cannot be despatched at the fag end of a paragraph, but demands, and therefore should obtain, a chapter to itself, setting forth its birth, parentage, and education, and unravelling its origin, which, like that of evil, is often very small.

CHAPTER VI.

—ALTMAYER.—"Cotton, cotton, some cotton here."

Birch's Translation of Faust.

HE by no means common or every-day cognomen of "Titanicous" had been bestowed upon its present illustrious owner on his entrance into the Thompson's family by his maternal uncle, a chemist, and one of the fifteen aldermen of Manchester, who, struck with the coppery hue of his nephew's complexion on his first arrival, had suggested this scientific and symbolical name, which continued to be equally appropriate to this prosperous scion of the house of Thompson, through all the progressive ascensions of his golden career. A small, a very small tenement on the banks of the Irk, had been the sphere in which this great luminary had arisen, and although his mother had been an heiress in possession of FIVE WHOLE HUNDRED POUNDS! and moreover sister to the alderman Penrhyn, the chemist, and niece to Mr. Perkins Penrhyn, the great brewer, the alderman's uncle, yet it was the old story of "ALL FOR LOVE, OR THE WORLD WELL LOST." So he had made a *mésalliance* and married Richard Thompson, working at the mills, while her younger sister, Miss Dora Penrhyn, was not alone the beauty of the family, but, contrary to that usual fatality, was also the fortunate one, and held her head so high that she was not only engaged to be married to the eldest son of the chief millowner, where Richard Thompson worked, but had eventually an opportunity of jilting him for the liberal member for Manchester; and as virtue generally is rewarded in this world

—at least the virtue of self-interest—she ultimately became the Honorable Mrs. Palmytongue Andover, and consequently the great lady of the family. Nevertheless, despite all this growing grandeur of the Penrhyns, her brother, the alderman, did not entirely abandon Mrs. Richard Thompson, but limited his displeasure to the preparation of a sort of perpetual blister, by which he made her upon all occasions feel and fruitlessly lament the foolish step she had taken; for, sooth to say, Richard Thompson was an ill-disposed, reckless, dissolute man, whose brain was quite turned by the *fortune* he had married, and he therefore preferred any Jennies to spinning-jennies. Nor did the birth of a little girl, about a year after his marriage, either sober him or soften the Penrhyn family towards his wife; for, except in the Celestial Empire, nowhere is the advent of inferior animals—to wit, a female human being—of less account than in the British empire. So that Mrs. Thompson had her little Janet all to herself; the mother could weep, and the child cry at their ease, and who should gain-say them? And in that same there is a comfort; for as for sympathy, “Good lack,” as Mr. Samuel Pepys was wont to exclaim, “*that* is a phase of the IDEAL which few succeed in obtaining; whereas sorrow is the work-a-day REALITY of most lives, and it is something to have uninterrupted time to do one’s work;” and this luxury Mrs. Thompson and her little future drudge enjoyed to the fullest extent. But the case was altered when, three years later, a HE Thompson was born into the world; for it occasioned what astronomers term a heliacal rising in the house of Penrhyn. Mrs. Alderman Penrhyn, as she called herself, and as her “select circle” called her, having the same evening presented her liege lord also with a small scarlet screaming machine, whose arrival, however, had not been expected for full two months later, as, in fact, it was a seven months’ child. The alderman was naturally a little flurried at the event; for though confinements are nothing in establishments that are used to them, yet such was not the case in the Penrhyn family, in which, for three generations, the census had never exceeded an only son and two daughters; and doubtless it was this statute of limitation which had caused them to set so high a value upon what each gentleman, in his own person, knew to be a rarity. No wonder then that, notwithstanding he bore the fifteenth segment of the IMPORTANCE OF MANCHESTER, Atlas-wise, on his own shoulders, the alderman should feel somewhat taken aback at this sudden and unexpected arrival of, perhaps, a future ornament to the corporation, more especially as the Honorable Palmytongue Andover, not at that time married to Miss Dora Penrhyn, had promised to stand sponsor to this Penrhynian olive-branch, or cotton-cone, as the aforesaid Palmytongue was wont irreverently to designate his impending god-child, when safe beyond the banks of the Irk and all its irksome trammels, and within the purlieus of St. James’s.

"Oh, Sir! Mr. Halderman Penrhyn, Sir! your '*lady*' was took't bad, and afore hever I could hinform you of the awrspicious ewent, or send for the doctor, she 'ave persented you with the beautifullest baby as hever I see, thof it have come into this here wale of tears by the short cut of a seven months *tower*, has the nobility hand gentry of the *metroplus* calls their travels; hand what's more, Mr. Penrhyn, Sir, hit's a son hand HAIR, and the very moral of yourself; for Penrhyn his printed hon every *feater* has *plain* hand indellible as Horrocks hand Miller his on the fag hend of the best white cotton goods."

This volley burst upon the alderman, as he was carefully spelling over the evening papers, from the voluminous and voluble Mrs. Flinks, the London monthly nurse, who had come all the way from Whitechapel five months before (that is from the first moment the "*awrspicious ewent*" could with any probability be anticipated) to sustain by her skill, and solace by her society the alderman's *gdy*, as the commercial phrase for wife runs.

"Bless me, Flinks, you don't say so," cried Mr. Alderman Penrhyn, starting to his feet as perpendicularly as if he had been galvanised, and flinging down the journal that had heretofore so exclusively engrossed his attention; for what were *even* politics, compared to paternity at such a moment. This announcement had been made in the little back parlour at the rear of the shop, in the very midst of the storming of Seringapatam, and indeed the hurried entrance of Mrs. Flinks, not only made all the China bowls and Nankin cups in the semicircular glass and mahogany closet or *buffet* rattle as if *they* also were besieged, but the decanter of port and its satellite glasses, that were ranged on the table before the alderman, ring to that degree, that for a few seconds their contents rather appeared to be grape shot than grape juice.

"Lawr, bless you, Mr. Penrhyn, Sir," exclaimed Mrs. Flinks, in preventive-service tone of authority, as she eyed with the glance of a connoisseur the port on the table in which the bee's-wing indignantly fluttered, while at the same time she caught the vanishing alderman by the tails of his coat, "*Pray*, be careful not to fluster your *lady*, by your too-sudden hand *permiscus* happearence afore her *hat* this 'ere *criticallest* time, hand *arter* hall she *haive* a gone through for your sake, and that hof the noble hand 'spectable Penrhyn family, hand though 'eaven forbid has *I*, 'Arriet Flinks, should hever go for to dispute has you was master, Mr. Penrhyn, Sir, hin your hown 'ouse, yet you will please remember that hon *this* hoccasion *I* must be *missus* hof hall that relates to hupstairs, *even* hof your *missus*—*hexcuse* my *familiarity*—of your dear *lady*, should say, hand the little stranger; 'Eaven bless them both, and their dear 'usban hand par, who I 'ope won't be no stranger to many more sich awrspicious ewents; but pray take a little *gine*, hand hendeavour to *subjus* your feelings—honorable has they *hare* to your present critical *circumstances*—afore you rushes

huncalled hinto the presence of your *lady* hand the hinnocent babe."

Clearing his throat, as if at a corporation dinner, the alderman not only took this advice, but also the hint; and pouring out a bumper of port for Mrs. Flinks, and another for himself, gave—if not with equal dignity, at all events with more sincerity, the health of his wife and son, than that with which he was wont to propose prosperity to Church and State at Civic feeds.

"A sentiment, Mr. Penrhyn, Sir, which 'Arriet Flinks his proud and 'appy to respond to, and many hof them."

"What! wives as well as sons, Mrs. Flinks?" chuckled the alderman, as he replenished that potentate's glass as well as his own.

"Well, to be sure, you *hare* the pleasantest, *facetious*est gent has hever was, but I never holds with 'usbans a taking hadwantage of their ladies' 'elpless sittiations to hindulge in they sort hof profligate bigamy kind of jokes like; I don't hendeed, you may *bleeve* me Mr. Penrhyn, Sir, cause hof course wives '*as* their feelings, whether they knows it or not, and likewise sich should be considered, whether has habsent friends hor present company, which has you know his halways hexcepted, so no hoffence, but you'll *hexcuse* me, Sir, for being so plain spoken, has Mother and Little Stranger *afore hall*, his 'Arriet Flinks's *motter*."

Alderman Penrhyn had scarcely greeted his heir, and congratulated Mrs. P—— on "that great," or rather, for the present, extremely small "fact" of his Majesty George the Third being a subject the richer, when he was summoned from the snug room in which he was expanding as a husband and budding as a father, by the announcement that Sally Cleaver was below, entreating for the love of Heaven, that he would come without delay to Mrs. Thompson, who was not expected to live; the said Sarah Cleaver humbly setting forth that she had made a voyage of discovery through every public-house in Manchester in quest of Richard Thompson, before she had taken the liberty of intruding upon the alderman at such an hour; but these voyages, like those to the North Pole, having produced no satisfactory result, she had come to report her failure at head-quarters, and solicit further assistance. Alderman Penrhyn was a little pompous and a little proud, but he was not a bad-hearted man; indeed, few aldermen are, for the rich viands and generous wines that distend into anti-Apolline physical proportions the contour of their figures, we firmly believe at the same time expand and mollify their hearts, so that by imbibing the turtle they also partake of the dove; not, however, that they are the more easily *pigeoned* on that account. Now, Alderman Penrhyn was one of those ancient Britons who patronised powder and persisted in a pig-tail, and the contrast of the snowy powder against his rubicund, not to say purple, face, gave him that sort of zöophite appearance which might have made a tongue and turnips, smoking

on his own hospitable board, pass for a striking likeness of him. He was, of course, overflowing with shirt frill; generally wore a white waistcoat, in the right pocket of which was a silver snuff-box, a thick gold chain, to which were appended from his fob like a jack-chain and weights, three huge seals, while the balance of power was maintained by an equally Patagonian gold watch within the gulf of his pepper and salt only-to-be-hinted-at, which were composed of an elastic web called, during the Peninsular war, Heaven and the tailors only knew why, "Emanuel's;" this fabric was of so vigorous, not to say tough a constitution, that no amount or length of service could take the shine out of it; on the contrary, the longer these garments were worn, the more they shone, especially at the knees. They buttoned tightly at the ankles, but *this* could only have been discovered when the alderman indulged in the *otium cum dignitate* of dressing-gown and slippers; for upon all the ordinary and set occasions of life he sported Hessians, and now their silken tassels, and the clinking gold of his great watch-seals received the sudden impetus of an impatient jerk as their wearer uncrossed his legs, upon Mrs. Flinks's communicating in her most official manner, that "a *pussan* of the name of Cleaver was below, and would not have *tookt* the liberty of calling at sich an hour, but that one Mrs. Thompson was dying, and her *good-for-nothink 'usban* was not to be found no where."

"Dying!—bless me!—you don't say so?—poor thing!—poor Anne! My dear," turning to his wife, "you'll excuse me for leaving you, but I can't let poor Anne die down there all by herself."

"Certainly not, Mr. Penrhyn," acquiesced a feeble voice from the bed, "and *do* say, if there is anything she wants she shall have it; Mrs. Flinks had better give you a parcel of baby's clothes to take to her, for he has plenty; and I dare say poor Anne has hardly anything to cover the poor child."

"Thank you, Fanny my dear, you always were a good, kind creature—none better," said the alderman, as he imprinted a kiss on his wife's forehead; and while Mrs. Flinks made up the parcel of baby-clothes, he slipped a bottle of brandy into his pocket, which caused that shrewd observer, Mrs. Flinks, to say, as soon as the door had closed upon honest Samuel Penrhyn, while she performed the dramatic little pantomime of wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron—

"Well! it's beautiful, to be sure, to see a gentleman hand his lady both a helping hon a feller-creeter hin distress, by what they heach feels, haccording to their hown naturs, *that* feller-creeter most wants!"

Upon going down stairs, Samuel Penrhyn found Sally Cleaver, a gaunt, bony, miserable woman, all angles, and arteries swollen like cords, though certainly not with blood; for the little there was in her body seemed to have got up a revolution, flown in her face,

and established a provisional government at the tip of her nose and round the rims of her eyes. On her head she wore, in guise of bonnet, one of those old brown-black cotton crow's nests, peculiar to washerwomen and charwomen, but wore it in a manner the very antipodes of the present fashion, as it kicked up behind as if it had fallen suddenly into a fit, descending perpendicularly in front over her forehead and nose like a lightning conductor. Her dress was of purple cotton, with white spots on it, very short, so that it fully displayed—either as a warning or an example, as the spectator chose to take it—a pair of very thick-soled black leather boots, laced up the front some inches above the ankle. Over this gown (not so much to preserve it immaculate as to conceal the spots, of every possible origin, from tea to tallow, and from beer to butter, with which it was already polluted) she wore a clean check apron, tied nearly under the arms of her very short, broad, and curiously flat waist; while across her shoulders was one of those mule draperies that are neither kerchief nor shawl, being too large for the former and too small for the latter, while its texture was equally mongrel, as it was impossible to decide which predominated in its fabric—worsted or cotton; and as for its hues of dingy crimson contending with yellow green, they made it look like a panoramic travesty of the feuds of the Guelphs and Ghibbelines, with a *dramatis personæ* of turnip and mangel-wurzel tops; and in this scanty garment she was vainly endeavouring to wrap, or rather roll, her poor, thin, bare arms. Her “local habitation” was on the bank of the Irk, in a small and much-dilapidated hovel, next door to Mrs. Thompson. Her name, as we are already aware, was Sally Cleaver; her *occupation*—when she could get one—was to take in washing or to go out “*charing*,” and her *pleasure* was to render to her equally miserable neighbours any of those little innumerable good offices in which the poor excel; for in such matters it is indeed the “fellow feeling” that makes them “wondrous kind;” and there was not in all Lancashire a more skilful hand at speeding a parting soul or hushing the wailings of a recently-arrived one, *alias* laying out the cold clay of an emancipated spirit, or receiving into this still colder world a newly-imprisoned one; and in the absence of the nowhere-to-be-found Mrs. Grigg, the official lady in that department, she had just rendered her services to Mrs. Thompson, and afterwards made her fruitless voyage of discovery in quest of Mr. Thompson, as before narrated, whose bachelor bacchanals were a disgrace to the guild of *Paterfamilii* to which he now belonged.

The alderman only stopped in the narrow passage called “the hall,” to take down his hat and great coat, and into the latter he was still inducting himself, and hastily buttoning it as he went, when he opened the door leading into the shop where Sally Cleaver was standing, actually forgetting to shiver, as she basked in the splendours of the oil lamps (for then gas was not), and looked from

them to the purple, ruby, and amber jars of coloured waters in the window, with almost as much admiration, if not with as much wonder, as Aladdin may have done when he was transported into the enchanted garden, whose flowers and fruits were all of precious stones glittering with diamond dew-drops; but no sooner did the alderman appear than she quitted these imaginary wanderings to concentrate all her identity into the realization of bobbing her very lowest and most reverential curtsy. Now, as the peculiarities of royalty, like those of genius, *ne tirent pas à conséquence*, they may be safely indulged in; for though Lord Byron lay in bed all day, wooed catarrhs by wearing his gills turned down, and eschewed limited liabilities as regarded brandy and soda water, and many young gentlemen have therefore since done the same, yet it has not followed on that account that the world is a poet the richer, though it may have acquired a fool the more; and with regard to more modern instances, though an equal number of young would-be geniuses may have driven their friends and relations nearly into Bedlam by their inveterately slovenly and desultory habits, and have smoked themselves into ambulating chimneys, there is no evidence that they have even maudled up to "Maud," or elicited a single puff beyond the self-sufficing ones of their own cigars or meerschaums; and so in like manner, though Alderman Penrhyn affected boiled mutton, and even wondered at second hand *how* the apples were got into a dumpling, and said, "What? What? What?" unsparingly to his inferiors, yet nothing could be farther from that loyal and worthy subject's intention (even theoretically) than to usurp the crown of His Majesty George the Third, much less in any way to endanger the Hanoverian Succession, therefore it was without the slightest taint of regicidal or revolutionary *arrière pensées*, as he tied a shawl round his neck, and further secured his hat against any unwarrantable *escapade* by tying it down more safely than becomingly with a red silk pocket handkerchief, that he addressed the following queries to Sally Cleaver:—

"Eh! What? What? What? Mrs. Thompson so ill?—in labour, I suppose?—when was she taken ill?"

"No, Sir, she baint in labour *now*, for the *babby's* born, but she be like to die from weakness, poor soul, and there aint never a single thing to give her; and afore I'd trouble your worship I've a bin to every public-house in Manchester looking for that good-for-nothing Richard Thompson, and he aint to be found nowhere."

And with this, after having rubbed the back of her right hand hastily across her nose, she proceeded to re-light the two inches of tallow candle in a horn lantern which she carried, which, with the sleepless and homœopathic economy of the *poor*, she had blown out on her arrival. But whether it was that the alderman entertained a morbidly marital aversion to the material of which this lantern was composed, or that he had *literal* ideas about letting "his light shine before men," is too analytic a matter to decide upon posi-

tively; but certain it is that he waived Sally Cleaver's dim receptacle for her small light aside with great dignity, and, turning to the young man behind the counter, said:—

"Eh! No! What? What? What? My good woman, don't trouble yourself! Fairfax, light me *my* lantern!"

And Fairfax accordingly produced from under the counter a splendid plate-glass octagon, containing within four pieces of wax lights of a goodly length, the outside of which lantern was surmounted by a sort of perforated scalloped Japan circle, having much the appearance of a mural crown. When the illumination was completed within it, Sally Cleaver's usual humility attained a culminating point, for rolling her apron, which *was* clean, round her hand, she dropped an involuntary curtsy to its splendours, as she received it from the hand of the grinning Fairfax, and said:—

"I bain't 'most fit to carry such a grand un as this."

However, with all due reverence, she preceded the alderman, almost backwards, so side-long was her movement, as she held this (to her) Koh-i-noor or Mountain of Light before him, that he might not make a false step over his own threshold. It was one of those dark, gusty nights in March, when winter, like a tyrant whose reign is drawing to a close, seems to double the severity of its edicts; and the wind, as if annoyed at the impotence of its fury, in not being able to dislodge the stars from the firmament, appears determined, at all events, to shake them in their orbits, as, from their tremulous motion, they look as if they were blown about in the lurid sky, and knew not in which cloud they should take shelter against the loud ravings of the hurricane.

"Bless me, what a night!" shivered the alderman, as one big round drop of rain, aimed by a whirlwind, descended with sufficient force upon the tip of his nose to have put it out, had the fire in it been real instead of only apparent. "Ahem! I suppose," continued he, with an accent in which contempt was happily blended with conscious superiority as well as the wind would permit the inflection of the tone to be heard—"I suppose it's another girl Mrs. Thompson has got?"

"No, Sir, it be a son; but I never see such a queer-looking babby as it be; it ain't like nothing as ever I see afore."

"Pooh!" rejoined Samuel Penrhyn, deciding the matter with a sort of *paterfamilias* extensive knowledge of the subject, "all babies are like half-boiled lobsters."

"Oh! it bain't that, Sir, for that's *naitrel* to them, poor little dears; but this here babby of Mrs. Thompson's is, for all the world, the colour of strong beer."

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!" grunted the alderman, as a compromise between a laugh and a sneer, "that's out of compliment to his grand-uncle, Perkins, I suppose, so I hope he won't think small beer of him, but will do something for him."

At length, after about a quarter of an hour's rapid walking under

great stress of weather, so that the alderman with his substantial habiliments, and poor Sally Cleaver, with her thread paper figure and garment, and the four wax-lights in the gorgeous lantern, had great difficulty in weathering the storm; they all *seven* arrived at the miserable hovel on the banks of the Irk, which poor Anne Thompson conventionally called her "*home*." Sally Cleaver pressed down the latch of the old black door, which was divided in the centre so as to form a gate at the basement part, where, when bolted from within, the children could lean over of a summer's evening, and learn by instalments that there was such a thing as a blue sky above this murky earth, while their mother received enough of its light into her hovel to drudge by.

"Be careful, Sir, if you please," whispered Sally Cleaver, holding down the lantern, "for there's a step as goes down here;" and so saying, with her left hand and *shoulder*, she held back both gate and door as wide as they would go to give ingress to Samuel Penrhyn's portly dimensions; after which, as soon as she had fastened the door, she carefully placed the "wonderful lamp"—vulgo lantern—on a long deal table that stood under the window, the said lantern causing a perfect and most unusual illumination, and displaying all that was to be seen, namely—a large bible and prayer-book, in green baize covers, on another table under an opposite window, four whitewashed walls, four low-seated, high-backed, rush-bottomed chairs, a large old-fashioned chimney, on the stone hearth of which were two small iron dogs, which compressed rather than supported the little fabric of fuel that was built up between them, composed of a mosaic of refuse pieces of coal, wood, peat, walnut shells, and any other ignitable materials, well embedded in long accumulated ashes; over this consumptive fire was suspended a black kettle to an iron hook, whose feeble attempt to sing under difficulties was more like a parody upon the faint mew-ing of a hungry kitten than the sociable getting up of its steam for a tea-party. Underneath the suspended kettle, in the front of the fire was a flat iron, and on one side was a small saucepan containing some oatmeal and water, which on the shortest notice had kindly consented to act the part of gruel. Within this wide hearth on each side of it, were two walnut tree benches, worn perfectly smooth and dark in the course of years, and at the foot of one was a little three-legged child's stool, upon which for the time being was curled, neither wholly asleep nor yet quite awake, a very respectable, staid-looking, but by no means too corpulent, tortoise-shell cat, of the name of Fudge, who seemed to be philosophically apathetic concerning all things—milk and mice excepted—but if he *had* a decided opinion it was probably of the wholesale nature of Leo the Tenth's as to what a very little wisdom is necessary for governing this world. The high chimney-piece itself was totally devoid of all the pauper knick-knackery of strung birds' eggs, peacocks' feathers, bottle-shaped gourds and shell castles, with a

happy couple made out of the surplus of the building materials; in lieu of which cottage objects of *vertu* were two or three long clay pipes, a blue jar containing shag tobacco, a tinder box, and a small brass pestle and mortar; and in truth the only attempt at ornament in the place was a large nettle plant in each window, trained on a sort of fan-shaped espalier, for a much diminished fitch of bacon in the rafter, flanked by two old newspaper bags full of dried herbs, came more under the head of the useful than the ornamental. Beyond this kitchen, as it might be called, was an inner room, before the door of which, running on a piece of tape, was a red and white check curtain, to keep out the draught, for in that room lay Anne Thompson with her new-born son, who already seemed to have found out the real secret of getting on in the world, which consists in making use of every one indiscriminately; for his mother being unavailable at the time, he had immediately accepted the kind offices of another charitable neighbour, who had come in to play the good Samaritan, while Sally Cleaver had gone in quest of the master of the house among publicans and sinners.

"Anne, my dear, it's me—your brother Sam," said the alderman, approaching the bed gently.

Anne opened her eyes for a moment, and her lips moved, but no sound issued from them.

"What? what? what? Have you no such thing as a spoon here? Get me a spoon," said he, looking from one to the other of the two women; "a teaspoon will do." And accordingly a teaspoon was brought, and, taking the bottle of brandy from his pocket, he poured some into it, and got it between his sister's lips, further saturating the corner of a handkerchief with some, and holding it to her nose, which appeared to revive her, and at the end of a quarter of an hour she was able to speak and thank her brother for his kindness.

"Don't speak, my dear; it's not I who am kind, but Fanny, for she has sent you some baby-linen. Perhaps you are not aware that, quite unexpectedly, she this evening presented me with a SON!" The latter was the only word that the alderman uttered aloud, but *that* was of too much importance to be mumbled *sotto voce*, though it was no sooner uttered, with all the sonorousness that it deserved, than he returned to the *obligato pianissimo* of a sick room, as he added, "And though two months before we expected HIM—he would not have said *it* for the world—" HE really could not be finer were he an EIGHTEEN months' child. Now, my dear, let me see your's!"

Whereupon Mrs. Wolfe, the charitable neighbour, produced the Thompsonian Romulus, to whom she had become purveyor.

"Bless my soul!" was the uncle's only exclamation, when he beheld the coppery hue of his nephew's complexion, his hands involuntarily flying behind his back, as if with a spring, to keep

them out of harm's way, lest there should be contagion in the touch.

The mother being in doubt whether this exclamation was one of admiration or surprise, or both, rallied so far as to say, "It is more than I either expect or deserve; but if you *would*, Samuel, be godfather to my poor child, I should die happy."

"Eh! what? what? what? my dear Anne, don't talk about dying. Well, well, if it is any comfort to you, I *will* be godfather to it." And *here* the alderman felt the neuter gender was peculiarly appropriate, for as he himself said afterwards, in confidence to his wife, he should as soon have thought of bestowing a sex on six *penn'orth* of halfpence! However, Mrs. Thompson did *not* die that time, but lived to struggle through many a hard day; while Samuel Penrhyn, after that tenderness of feeling which the prospect of his sister's death occasioned had subsided, resolved at all events to have his joke for his condescension; and therefore, at one and the same time, astonished the curate and displayed his own science by bestowing on his nephew at the baptismal font the very outlandish, not to say heathenish, Christian name of Titaniferous! Meanwhile *his* own son was, at an almost co-equal period, christened by the rector, with great pomp, by the more aristocratic name of Andover, the Hon. Palmytongue standing sponsor in person; and it was then and there that he met with that shocking accident of falling in love with Miss Dora: and, clever as he was at electioneering, he found that in that quarter no bribery was sufficient to produce corruption, and that the only way to secure *her* vote and interest for his election as her declared admirer was by making her Mrs. Andover. Well, there was nothing for it but to make the best of it, and of course cut Manchester, in a parliamentary point of view, and set up for some other place, where only his wife's beauty would be seen, and her antecedents ignored. It was never clearly ascertained whether her jilted lover, the son of the great mill-owner, had committed suicide or not; but what was quite certain was, that from the day she became the Honorable Mrs. Andover *he* never was seen or heard of more in Manchester, which did not, however, prevent the bells ringing out merrily upon that joyous occasion, or Mr. Perkins Penrhyn, her bachelor uncle, the great brewer, from coming most unexpectedly down with a pretty little contribution to her *trousseau* of £30,000, of which she generously sent £10 to her sister, Mrs. Thompson, with a short letter, saying that as she had so disgraced herself and her whole family by her marriage, she must beg that she would never intrude upon her, as she should die if ever Mr. Andover discovered that she had a sister in such a sphere of life. It appeared that the star of the Penrhyns was in the ascendant, for six months after the marriage of Miss Dora, Perkins Penrhyn died, leaving the whole of his property, amounting to £150,000, to his nephew Samuel, on condition that he gave

up his shop and continued the brewery—a proviso of which the latter only too gladly availed himself, and in the flush of his fortunes munificently allowed his sister Anne £20 a-year, making her husband's worthlessness a plausible pretext for not giving her more, but promising that if Titaniferous turned out well, he might eventually do something for *him*.

"The first most notable and universal distinction of men," saith a quaint old writer, whose orthography we will take the liberty of modernising, "which concerneth the soul, and body, and whole essence of man is taken and drawn from the divers sites of the world, according to which the aspect and influences of heaven, and the sun, the air, the climate, the country are divers; so likewise not only the colour, the feature, the complexion, the countenance, the manners are divers, but also the faculties of the soul—*plaga celi non solum ad robur corporum sed animorum facit. Athenis tenue cælum, ex quo etiam acutiores Attici; Crassum Thebis, ideo pingues Thebani et Valentes*. And, therefore, Plato thanked God that he was an Athenian and not a Theban." In like manner might the young Titaniferous, whose whole and sole aim from his earliest dawn was to make and scrape money, have thanked heaven that *he* had not been born in any less commercial city than Manchester, the very air of which seemed to act as a whet-stone to his calculating organs, and its fumes as a hot-bed to his financial genius, which first began strongly to develope itself between seven and eight years of age. When from the robbing of orchards, and the invasion of hen-roosts, other boys reaped colics and canings, *he* only acquired pence and power; and the secret of his negotiations was this—his superior genius marked down the particular roost or orchard to be pillaged; he then called a council of war of all his contemporaneous ragamuffins in his own *locale*, told them where the treasure was to be found, and professed himself perfectly ready to risk his ragged corduroys, and his equally dilapidated reputation in obtaining it, provided they (and they were never less than twelve, though oftener double that number) would give him a half-penny each to indemnify him for the double danger he might incur of a fall and flogging. Of course it was not to be supposed that these young gentlemen could always collectively command such a large sum of ready money as a half-penny a piece—à l'improviste; but then Titaniferous ever obligingly adjourned the adventure for the number of days requisite, according to their different circumstances, to the coaxing or bullying their tough or tender parents, as the case might be, out of the necessary funds; and when they were duly collected and as duly transferred to *his* pocket, then, and not until then, would "*Nefarious*" (as they not inappropriately called him, from inability to achieve such a mouthful as Titaniferous) put himself at the head of his gallant (?) rifles and march upon the place to be attacked, where, feeling that *he* was born to climb, *he*, basket in hand, "*did the*

daring deed" alone, while the rest kept ward and watch below. Then would he distribute the *fruits* of his valour, first binding each recipient to promise that if any one of them "*should be cotched*" he would die before he would give up the names of any of his confederates, concluding with an heroic protest that *he would*; and then they separated, the incautious horticulturists taking the highway and thoroughfares, and the more *prudent* speculator skulking home some bye-way, jingling his wealth in both pockets as he went, and little heeding the uncomfortable bumps he was receiving from some half-dozen of the best apples or pears that he had secreted in his cap, and which he would take home and dutifully present as a present to his mother, begging she would roast them for supper, and saying they had been bought with some half-pence which a gentleman had given him for holding his horse. It was true that all this diplomacy, clever and orthodox as it was, from being so utterly rascally and hollow, did *not* blind the authorities, who had already bestowed upon the hope of the house of Thompson the *sobriquet* of "the Root of all Evil;" not that *he* was ever idle, Heaven only knows, but he was impervious to birch, and untangible to beadles, for, as they despairingly remarked, "There was no catching on a boy with such a slippery trip-up-your-heels, trick-the-stocks sort of name as TITANIFEROUS. But, besides orchards and hen-roosts, the young financial genius had other resources; but is not resource, in fact, a synonyme for genius?—one of the chief of which he derived from the paternal pipes, for *he* soon came to that great and satisfactory solution in modern ethics of "What are fathers for *but* to pay the piper?" Now it so happened that when Richard Thompson received his wages of a Saturday night he generally bought a provision of pipes—say two or three dozen,—but no sooner were these pipes put away in a side-cupboard than the young financier would daily abstract *one* from the hoard, which of course greatly though gradually diminished it, and *then* he knew that his father's monetary dearths were periodical and by no means far between, and upon the evening that the closet was pipeless Titaniferous was sure to be at his post, on the three-legged stool within the grate, either innocently nursing the cat (for the tortoiseshell had *not* died without issue, though it had only enjoyed the life title of Fudge), or else affectionately teasing his sister, but at the same time never losing sight of his father's movements, who, after having groped in vain for a pipe on the high chimney-piece, would then go to the cupboard, and finding "all barren there too," having slammed to the door and said, "Here's a go!" would, after much diving in all his pockets, at length fish up a half-penny and call out, "Here! Tight-un, go and fetch me a pipe."

For so it was that he called his hopeful son, having abandoned Titaniferous as impracticable from the first; and lo, that ministering angel would vanish, mounting first into the loft ostensibly for

his cap, but in reality to add the fresh dividend to his capital and take out one of his sire's own pipes, with which he would make the tour of the suburb, and, with that constant eye to business which never deserted him, if he met any of his "pals," arrange for the coming-off of another predatory expedition, and then run back breathless with the pipe, saying Mrs. Meadows (the nearest emporium) was out of pipes, so he had been obliged to go on to "The Man in the Moon" for it. But at length, when Titaniferous was only ten years old, his father departed this life, *viâ delirium tremens*; and in justice to his heir, it must be stated that he *really* regretted him as a serious commercial loss, though his filial affection found a safety-valve in being able to afford his widowed mother pecuniary assistance on the melancholy occasion, as he told her *he* knew "a cove as could lend her ten shillings, if she would pay him threepence a week for it, and promise to repay it in six weeks;" which, never dreaming that she was indebted to the "*prudence*" and providence of her own son for this accommodation, the poor woman gladly agreed to do; so there was eighteen pence made by one *great* speculation!—for hitherto he had never risked more than single pence to his companions, for which he obtained the usurious interest of a halfpenny on each penny. But at length his honest godfather and uncle began to be scandalized at the reports that reached him from all quarters, touching his nephew's utter incapacity for distinguishing between *meum* and *tuum*—reports which were not the less injurious because the facts they set forth could never actually be brought home to him; for, as the alderman truly observed, he had the copper of a man-of-war and the brass of the very d——l, so that his maternal uncle was truly perplexed what to do with him, the more so that, although the Penrhyns had been by no means backward in trying to avail themselves of the family and political interest of the Honorable Palmytongue Andover, yet they were beginning to weary of his kind offers of getting them appointments either at Ceylon, Guinea, or in the interior of Africa, and at length ventured to suggest to the Honorable Gentleman that, if it were all the same to *him*, they, for their own individual parts, should prefer even *three feet above ground* in any other quarter of the globe. But at length matters began to wear such a sinister aspect in and about Manchester (from which Alderman Penrhyn was about to remove to a fine house in Grosvenor Place, London), that he wrote a most urgent letter to his brother-in-law, impressing upon him that it was absolutely necessary that the young Titaniferous should "leave his country for his country's good," and saying that *he* would pay for his schooling for six years, and give him an outfit if Mr. Andover would get him a writership. And the chief stumbling-block, Richard Thompson, being now removed, Samuel Penrhyn had the less scruple in making this appeal to his aristocratic connexion, who upon his part entertained the proposition

by opportunely recollecting that India was one of the very best sinking-funds for vulgar relations, and if they *did* return after a time they would not, or rather could not, do so unless Fortune smiled upon them, and then it was unimportant what they had been or *were*, for the Honorable Palmytongue Andover knew his Rule Britannia too well not to know that, no matter how common or how dirty the clay was, if it were but well gilt, English society was a Horeb that always bows down and worships the golden calf wherever it appears. In due time, then, Titaniferous Thompson was shipped out to Calcutta; in due time (or as some whispered, in undue time) he flourished there; in due time he it was who had eased Charles Egerton of £50,000, and encumbered Baron's Court with a mortgage to that amount to pay it; in due time he returned to England and became an East India Director, a Baronet, a Member of Parliament, and a shareholder in every lucrative speculation of the day; and as his poor uncle Samuel had died prematurely, broken-hearted at his son's extravagance, whose debts he had paid over and over again, till he had nothing left to live upon but his wife's pin-money while *she* lived, and an annuity from the brewery when she died, the plate, and the few other personals he had to leave, he would not leave to the two victims his prodigal son had made, viz., Mrs. Penrhyn and her son Harcourt, but, with that strange inverted justice peculiar to fathers, mothers-in-law, and millionnaires, he still further revenged his son's misconduct on *them*, and left the little he had to leave—which, little as it was, would have been *much* to them—to his rich, and therefore "*prudent*" and praiseworthy, nephew Titaniferous, who did *not* need it, though he always *wanted* everything that was to be got, and therefore *got* it; for the fickle goddess, like many other silly women—no, "*females!*"—for there is as wide a distinction between *women* and "*females*" as there is between a lady and a fine lady—but, like a silly "*female*," Fortune exacts and requires an immense amount of adulation, and always favours those who are guilty of unimaginable meannesses to get into her good graces, whereas, those who slight her by an honest, independent spirit she is sure to wreak her vengeance upon, by taking care that they never shall have any *other* sort of independence. But as the sea, in its ebbs and flows, is ever bringing to the surface divers objects long hidden within its depths, so the tide of Time, in each succeeding age, casts upon the world's surface the peculiar characters most suited to the exigency of the epoch in which they appear; and the present being the millenium of meanness, wherein all things good and great are out of place, Sir Titaniferous Thompson was just the man to grow out of, and to flourish upon, the reigning system of moral and monetary littleness, as the oak apple does out of and upon the oak—an ungainly excrescence, it is true, *deriving everything and yielding nothing*. It is also true that occasionally little anecdotes of his early years *would* float about, like motes

in his sunshine; but it is "*bad taste*" to believe or to repeat anything injurious to persons who *have* succeeded, for there is no material like gold for stopping tongues, as well as teeth. And true it was likewise that the bran-new Baronet's heart was as hard as his cash—that he would foreclose a mortgage to a day—nay, to an hour—and, if a stringent necessity threw the opportunity in his way, would engulf for a hundred pounds a picture, a horse, or a necklace, that was worth several hundreds, and even accommodate his less fortunate fellow-creatures with pecuniary loans at a rate which, in the Minorities, might have been called usury. But in England we never apply ugly words to persons in high places or good positions; and who could be in a better than Sir Titaniferous Thompson, for he had irons in every fire throughout the country?—in the political fire, which, being slack, requires more time to heat *the* particular iron invested in it—in the fire of the press, which, being wild, runs rapidly through the country, leading the public a pretty dance, hither, thither, and everywhere; and in the commercial fire, which, being brisk, made him quick returns for his pains. Finally, never having been troubled with any of the puerilities of love, he could afford to speculate in a wife, and did so accordingly by marrying Lady Georgiana Giraffe, a very ugly and portionless niece of the Premier's, which might be considered as a sort of financial *tour de force*, as it was getting *high* interest where there was no capital, except that capital house of my Lord Dunnington's, described at the beginning of this very long chapter, which "the distinguished millionaire," as the *Morning Post* or *Court Journal* would style him, had taken on the occasion of his marriage. His mother and sister, it was supposed, had both had the goodness to die out of the way about two years after his return from India—it might have been from want; but gentlemen's *private* affairs—at least *rich* gentlemen's—in "*moral England*" are sacred!—so Heaven forbid that we should have the vulgarity and "*bad taste*" to pry into those of Sir Titaniferous Thompson, who now began to hold his head as high as his wife's name, and to enjoy that universal *homage* which is better than mere RESPECT, being, as it were, the state carriage of respect, which WEALTH, no matter *how* acquired, never fails to command throughout the British Empire. Oh! neutralising indifference of the Pyrrhonians! Oh! sovereign good of Pythagoras! Oh! magnanimity of Aristotle! it was reserved for the middle of the nineteenth century to furnish sufficient material (despite its gigantic strides in the physical sciences) for *really* carrying out your

*Nil admirari prope est res una, Numici,
Sed quæ possit facere, et servare beatum.*

With regard to the other star of the Penrhyn family, the *pi-devant* Miss Dora, her liege lord had been gathered to his fathers some five years before the Crimean war, but not before he had left his

wife a Countess's coronet (and suitable jointure) to console her for her widow's cap, for, through a gun-accident that had happened to his elder brother on the moors he had become Lord de Baskerville, in which title he was succeeded by *his* eldest son, the present peer, while the second, another, and by no means degenerate Palmytongue Andover, was one of the under-secretaries of state, a third son, Grafton Andover, being already a Lieutenant-colonel in the Grenadier Guards. With regard to his two daughters, the eldest, Lady Mabel, had married the heir-apparent to a dukedom, Lord Cranford; but her sister, Lady Florinda Andover, though also a beauty, was still *in the market*; (what a pity it is that there is not a sort of Matrimonial Tattersall's, where the diplomacy of match-making dowagers might be brought to a focus, instead of being weakened by its rays being indiscriminately scattered over every *salon* and watering-place in Europe;) but Lady de Baskerville was just the sort of woman, with regard to her daughters, to parody in their behalf the vulgar proverb of not selling her hen of a rainy day, for there are no women so worldly, without perhaps ever acquiring the fine tact requisite to make a woman of the world, as those of plebeian origin, who, having begun by making a scaling ladder of their *own* hearts, view all things but from one point, namely, the height to which they have attained, and consequently deem that all beneath *that height* are but so many paths to be trampled on in attaining it; but having *duked* her eldest daughter, Lady de Baskerville began seriously to consider, that as in the market matrimonial the supply of Dukes is by no means equal to the demand, and what with the war, and the march of intellect, and the dreadful sort of people that got into parliament now, and those horrid railroads that compelled everybody to travel in the same way, whether somebodys or nobodys, she began, we say, to accustom herself to the idea as a *pis aller* that, perhaps after all, some petty reigning German Prince would be the best point Florinda could steer for. How very unlucky that she had not cultivated Louis Napoleon more at the time he was to be had, at least to dinner, for the asking, and one memorable evening, somewhere about the year 1847, haunted the retrospect of her regrets more than any other! It was at the St. James's Theatre; there were a great many royalties "in want of situations" just then, from the Conde de Montemoulin downwards, and on *that* particular evening the latter was in one of the stalls; the Duc de Nemours, then on a visit to Her Majesty, was in the Queen's box; and presently Louis Napoleon Bonaparte sauntered into the *foyer*. Boulogne was fresh in everybody's memory, and no sooner had he appeared than an ill-bred and ill-suppressed titter ran through the house, and, like electric fluid, pervaded even the royal box. Never could Lady de Baskerville forget the look of sovereign disdain which the embryo Majesty of France on that occasion flung, like an earnest of his future largesses, among that aristocratic crowd

or the *Imperator* air with which he twirled his moustache; but, having been born and bred in Manchester during the Peninsular War, Lady de Baskerville was no linguist: therefore, how should she have read in that moustache a future imperial, or known that that contemptuous twirl of it, being interpreted, meant "*Laugh away, good people—chaqu'un à son tour—but the time is approaching when you will bow down and worship me, and the faintest of my smiles will have a more world-wide weight than all yours put together. Mind, I say ALL!*" Impossible! And as she argued the matter with herself, between the parentheses of a sigh and an "Ah! had I only invited him into my box on *that* evening!—but no, I nor no one else could have foreseen all that has since happened;" and then she would turn away from this forlorn hope, and, though neither a genius nor a philosopher, begin muddying her brains with the mystic materialisms of the above-mentioned German speculations, more especially as her eldest son, the present peer, was not wedded, except to his beautiful yacht, "*The Esmeralda*," and, much to his mother's disappointment, he appeared not to have the least idea of giving himself either heirs or airs, for he was perfectly unaffected and good-natured, and said he had no notion of marrying, unless for love; and as for the title, why, if he did chance to be eaten up by a shark, or to break his neck out hunting, *it* would not die with him, as there were Palmytongue and Grafton, his two brothers; "and let them have a chance, poor devils," were generally the concluding words with which he turned off his lady mother's matrimonial exhortations.

Now poor Mrs. Penrhyn knew very well that if her humble and toiling existence was not absolutely ignored by her husband's aunt, Lady de Baskerville, and by his rich cousin, Sir Titaniferous Thompson, yet that it was so far forgotten that she, or rather her chief self, Harcourt, might remain *unscathed*, but that to remind them of it, in her present position, would be to arouse the dormant adders of low ambition and puerile pride, and cause them to dart their venom into the, as yet, healthy because unfettered career of her son, for whom all *she* asked was a fair field and no favour. Then decidedly he should not have chosen a battle-field, where, in the British army at least, there is *no* field for the recompense of the most heroic deeds *without* favour. And yet, who shall say that the poor widow and her son, down in the cold shade, unnoticed and unknown, had not the best of it, if it be true, as it most assuredly is, that—

"Le monde n'est dangereux, que quand on en aime les maximes. Lorsque ce que s'y passe, n'est point regardé d'un faux jour; c'est une leçon continuelle pour fuir le Vice, et embrasser la Vertu." Nevertheless, the Titaniferous of this work-a-day world are always sure to be—at least for a while—VERY SUCCESSFUL!

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH MR. PHIPPEN PAYS HIS RESPECTS TO AND
TAKES LEAVE OF MRS. PEMBLE.

"SARAH, Sârah Nash!" called Mr. Phippen, as he descended the creaking stairs in Church Street, his hessians accompanying their basso with a squeaking falsetto at every step he proceeded. He had rung, but as usual did not give Sârah Nash time to answer his appeal, had she been the wind, or a wire from an electric telegraph, instead of that slow and weary-footed animal—a maid of all work; but upon this particular morning he seemed, if possible, in a greater state of precipitation and presto-begone speed than usual, for it was the day prior to Mrs. Pemble's departure for Baron's Court, and he had just received a note of thanks from her for all his kindness, and the pocket-handkerchiefs she had hemmed for him, of which she begged his acceptance as a little remembrance of her; and as, like most men of business, he detested writing if he could avoid it, he was now hurrying down stairs with her note open in one hand and the packet of handkerchiefs in the other, in quest of Sarah to despatch her as *chargé d'affaires* to "the parlour" to know whether Mrs. Pemble would allow him to "pay his respects to her." At the foot of the stairs he met the nymph he was in quest of, sobbing and making her eyes still redder by scrubbing the tears out of them, with the corner of a very coarse canvas apron, in which she had been performing the ablutions of the kitchen dresser.

"Eh! what's the matter, Sârah Nash?" said Mr. Phippen, pulling up suddenly, as he nearly tumbled over her, and must, but for a timely grasping of the bannister, have inevitably been involved in her fall; "been peeling onions, eh! my good girl—or quarrelling with Tim?"

"No, Sir, but the lady in the parlour have give me such a beautiful dress, to be sure, and I be so sorry as she's leaving; for no one in *them* parlours ever give me anything before but trouble, and *p'raps* half-a-crown on leaving; and I dare say when she's gone, Mrs. Pyke will go on a letting on 'em again to some of them there smoking, *mustashed* gents, that pisons a house before they are five minutes in it, and there aint no getting no sweet again even when they're out of it."

"Pooh! pooh! never cry at getting a new gown, girl, or else I shall be afraid you'll go into deep mourning if I give you the shawl intended. Gadzooks! you're not the only one; look here! look at my presents!"

And so saying, Mr. Phippen rolled one of the very gorgeous-looking kerchiefs round his head *à la Turc*, threw two more lightly and gracefully over his shoulders in guise of drapery, and held the other two, one in each hand, out at arm's length, as aeronauts wave small flags out of a balloon during their ascension. The result was that Sarah burst out laughing.

"Sarah Nash! what are you laughing at? Did you never see new silk pocket-handkerchiefs before? Oh! I understand," continued he, undecorating himself, and restoring all the pocket-handkerchiefs once more to the grasp of his right hand, "you think perhaps that way of wearing them makes me look too like the Great Mogul on the wrappers of the playing cards, 'DUTY ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE!' Now go and give my compliments to Mrs. Pemble, and ask her if she will allow me to come and pay my respects to her."

"In a minute, Sir, when I've slipped on a clean apron."

"Right, Sarah Nash, to put on a clean apron for the lady; but I wish, for the good of their health, you'd sometimes give those clean aprons an airing up-stairs too."

"Well, Sir, so I would; but you always rings in such a hurry, and comes down afore I can *git* up."

"Aye, aye, Sarah Nash, I understand! No time for washing, and ironing, and getting up fine things, eh! There, away with you, and make haste back!"

For the few seconds that it took Sarah to go down stairs, Mr. Phippen, as a sort of anodyne to his impatience, took to folding up the handkerchiefs one by one, and laying them, when folded, symmetrically one over the other on the turn of the bannister; and when Sarah returned to say that Mrs. Pemble would be very happy to see him, he was in the very act of ejaculating, as he took them up—"Egad! I think I did that very well!"

Even when Mr. Phippen's face was in repose, there was a peculiarity about the right side of his upper lip which shewed two of his front teeth, and gave a facetious expression to his face, which otherwise would have been severe, from the serious gravity of his intensely brown eyes (for they were *not* black); but now a real *bond fide* smile illumined his whole countenance as he entered Mrs. Pemble's room, and even his bay-wig shone brightly like a gleam of sunshine, as he held out both his hands, full as one already was, and said—

"How am I to thank you, my good lady, for your kind present? The very thing I wanted too! 'Egad! I wish I had half-a-dozen noses, to use them all at once—ha! ha! ha!—for they are uncommon pretty patterns, 'pon my life! So we're going to lose you?" added he, as he, with some little difficulty, and not without a slight expression of regret at the hardness of the struggle, wedged himself into *the* chair, the three-cornered, adamantine horse-hair, which Mrs. Pemble had hospitably advanced for his reception.

"Egad!" he continued, as soon as the struggle was over, "it's bad enough to lose one's handkerchief, but it's *too* bad to lose the donor."

"As you have so kindly interested yourself in my behalf, Mr. Phippen, I am very happy to tell you that I have not only succeeded in getting a situation, but one that has surpassed my most sanguine expectations."

"Oh! indeed! I'm very glad of it; but as *self* always predominates more or less with us all, I hope it's in *Lunnon*, for my sake, that I may have the pleasure of seeing you sometimes."

"Indeed, I sincerely hope that we *shall* meet again, for I shall not easily forget your kindness to me in this miserable lodging."

"No, no, my good lady, not so miserable neither," interrupted Mr. Phippen, "on the principle of Socrates' young gentleman. I'm no scholar, but you know Socrates' young gentleman, don't you? It's a wonder that *I* know him though, as he's not in Shakspeare, who's, egad! about the only author I *do* know." Of course Mrs. Pemble had *not* the pleasure of Socrates' *young gentleman's* acquaintance, for no well-bred person ever *does* know any story that an elderly gentleman or lady is about to tell.

"No, I do not," smiled she, "so I hope you'll introduce him to me."

"Oh! well," resumed Mr. Phippen, evidently delighted to think that his anecdote was "*looking up*," "'Egad! as I told you, I'm no scholar, and I suppose this is what you learned folk would call a classical Joe Miller, but I heard it many years ago; and I've never forgotten it, as every day of my life I see chaps it's so applicable to. The story is this:—A young fellow at Athens, where it seems they had Tom Noddys as well as we have in *Lunnon*, was saying, one day, that he did not think after all travelling was any advantage to people, as he had travelled a great deal and did not find himself a bit the better for it. 'Ah!' says Socrates, 'that's because you took *yourself* with you.' Now *I* mean just the reverse—that *you* could not have found this lodging so bad after all, for the very same reason, that *you* had yourself with you; but egad!" continued he, hitching up on one side of the very uncomfortable sedentary pillory he was in, and nervously anxious to waive the applause due to a man who had said a good thing, though only at second hand, "had you remained, I should have begged your acceptance of an easy chair, for *this* is a confounded machine."

"Thank you, dear Mr. Phippen, for the compliment; I think I may believe that it's sincere."

"Egad! yes, I'm no Chesterfield."

"Except that I'm sure you agree with Lord Chesterfield, that flattery is the disgrace of good breeding, as brutality often is of truth and sincerity."

AWAY SALADY NO 2224

"Does he say that? Well come, that's not so bad; I'll make an entry of *that*, for I don't like bears neither, except on 'Change'—he! he! he!" chuckled Mr. Phippen, as he consigned the Chesterfieldian *mot* to his pocket-book, for *this* pleasantry about the bears *was* his own. "Does he say any more on that head, or is that all?"

"No; he adds, what is equally true, that good breeding is the middle point between these two odious extremes. Ceremony is the superstition of good breeding as well as of religion; but yet, being an out-work to both, should not be absolutely demolished. He also says, in which I most perfectly agree, that many a passion and many a friendship is degraded and wholly *slattered* away by an unguarded and illiberal familiarity. And most truly of all, he says, 'Great talents may make a man famous, great merit make him respected; and great learning make him esteemed; but good breeding can alone make him beloved.'"

"Egad! I'll read Lord Chesterfield; I don't suppose at my time of life there is any fear of his corrupting my morals?—ha! ha! ha!—and he may improve my manners; but tell me, my good lady, for I interrupted you, which was *not* very good manners, is it in Lunnon that you are going to live?"

"No, in Flintshire, at Sir Gregory Kempenfelt's."

"Sir Gregory Kempenfelt's!—Whew!"

"Do you know him?"

"But very slightly; I once did some India bonds for him; but I know that if report says true, he is an excellent person and a *thorough gentleman*;—what I mean by that is, Christian within and Chesterfield without, so that I really wish you joy at having lighted upon him. Bless me! here's that confounded omnibus already," said he, starting to his feet as rapidly as the preventive check of the lion-pawed-arms of the three-cornered chair into which he was so geometrically wedged would allow him; "but here, my good lady," putting a card into her hand, "is the number of my office in Threadneedle Street, in case you might ever want to write to me. For instance, you can't do better than send me what you can spare out of your salary; and I'll see what I can make of it for you, for as I once told the Colonial Secretary, the great thing is to try and increase the population of *guinea*—ha! ha! ha! Now with regard to the young man, your son, you know, what I told you was, that if ever I had an *opportunity* I would serve him, for in making promises, to avoid the pie-crust Goodwin Sands, I always stand out for the chops of the Channel of Limited Liability, which is the safest channel for all promisers."

"Indeed, my dear Sir, I do not consider that you are bound by any promise to me, and I shall always feel equally grateful for the kindness of your intentions towards me."

"Yes, yes, *you find the opportunity*, and I'll find the help, and so no more about *intentions*, for if I must turn paviour I'd rather

it was not for the infernal regions. 'Pon my life, though, I'm sorry you're going. Well, it's all for the best. I don't think I shall remain in this lodging when you're gone, but I shan't leave Sârah Nash here; I'll take a lease of *her*—with fixtures, her aprons, the cat, round-eared caps, and the gown you gave her—from old Mother Pyke. I think it would be too much for her and Tim to be left here, after you and I were both gone, for I don't think there is any philosophy either about Tim or Sârah Nash, so that they would be of no support to each other, and as Sârah Nash would not go and take the air on the house-tops with Tim, I think she'd mop herself to death. Well, God bless you! Good bye! and if ever you want a friend, remember, something of the sort may be found at No. —, Threadneedle Street, by the name of Phillip Phippen;" and, cordially ~~wringing~~ ^{wringing} her hand, Mr. Phippen hurried out of the room, silently snatching his hat from "Sârah Nash," and butted, rather than got, into the omnibus, without a single jest or a single order, which did not, however, prevent his whistling "Cheer, boys, cheer" with great energy as the cab closed the door.

Universus mundus exercet histrioniam!

And if Mr. Phippen's object was, despite the unwonted absence of quip or crank, to make the cab think he was in a high state of hilarity, we are happy to record that in producing that impression he had *not* paid too dear for his whistle, as it was VERY SUCCESSFUL!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JOURNEY—THE RENCONTRE; OR, WHO'S WHO AT A RAILWAY STATION.

ALL the way to Euston Square the sobs of poor Sarah tolled like a knell in Mrs. Pemble's ears, and the kind brown eyes of Mr. Phippen haunted her, and her only consolation about the former was his promise of taking the poor girl with him if he went away; and although he had *said* this in a jocular manner, she felt certain from the kindness of his heart that it was a promise. On arriving at the terminus the cab she was in had to stop while some one was alighting from another cab immediately before it, which had that moment arrived from the opposite direction; and as the gentleman alighted from it in turning round to give some directions to his servant about the luggage, he saw Mrs. Pemble. It was Sir Gregory Kempenfelt.

"Ah!" cried he, upon recognizing her, as he advanced to shake hands with her, "to the minute! We deserve to go through a campaign together. I respect punctuality, for it is the probity of

social intercourse. Allow me," added he, offering his hand to help her out of the cab, and then giving her his arm as soon as she had reached the pavement, after which, turning to his servant, he said—

"Here, Clayton, see to Mrs. Pemble's luggage, and pay the man."

"Where from, Sir?" asked he, again touching his hat as he looked towards Mrs. Pemble for the answer to the question he had asked his master.

"From Church Street, Chelsea," said she, putting ~~the~~ money into his hand; "here is his fare."

"I see," said Sir Gregory, with his rare smile, as they walked on, "that you are not half ~~as~~ in your part yet: don't you know that the *governess's*" (and he emphasised the word) "travelling expenses are always paid by those who engage them?"

"Yes, I know that in *that* respect they are on a par with servants; but it is all your fault, Sir Gregory, you are so very kind that I forget I am your governess."

"I hope so."

"I hope *not*, and that I shall prove, by a conscientious discharge of my duties, that I have never forgotten it: and indeed, when duty and pleasure are so closely united, there is not much fear of either being neglected, much less forgotten."

They had scarcely reached the platform, in their way to the waiting-room, when Clayton came running after them.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am; but is this brooch your's?—for in looking to see that you had left nothing, I found this on the floor of the cab."

"Oh! thank you a thousand times! I would not have lost it for the world!" said she, taking it eagerly. "How stupid of me! I forgot to fasten it to my chain."

It was, in fact, a very beautiful miniature of Harcourt, in no costume, but with the collar rather open, showing a very white and finely-shaped throat, with a cloak, thrown in the Spanish way over the left shoulder, which formed an easy and graceful drapery.

"May I?" said Sir Gregory, holding out his hand for it, as Mrs. Pemble was about to replace it in her shawl.

"Oh, certainly! it is my dear boy's portrait."

"What an uncommonly handsome young fellow!—very like you!"

"Do you think so? I always thought him like his father; but perhaps there may be a look of both," sighed the mother.

"Charming countenance! something so *rayonnante* and ingenuous about it, as if, having nothing to conceal, all the windows of his heart were thrown wide open, and gave out quite as much sunshine as they took in."

"Well *that* he is! open as the day, thank God!—or *was*,—for who knows?"—and here the tears choked her utterance, and

though she could not finish the sentence, her kind and sympathizing companion guessed her thought, and as he pressed her arm, said—

"Come! come! don't be ungrateful to Providence: don't you know we Kempenfelts are of Swedish origin? and, like a true old Norseman as I am, or ought to be, I have a glimmering of second-sight about me; and I am greatly mistaken if the halo that I see radiating round that young head will not be won, beam by beam, from the refracted rays of earthly glory."

"Ah! even could I think so, my dear Sir, it is but right that I should school myself in time, and ever remember that the LORD giveth and the LORD taketh, and that

'Death, which all meaner bliss destroys,
 Robs not the spirit of its joys;
 And if his stroke can sever
 The fleshly seal, 'tis but to bring
 The living waters from their spring,
 And bid them gush for ever.'

Again her companion pressed her arm; but this time he was silent, for there are sorrows which, being unto death, become sacred, and to attempt by puerile consolations to roll away the sepulchral stone which covers them is sacrilege, not sympathy.

"Have the goodness to give me a cup of hot and very strong coffee, if you have it," said Sir Gregory Kempenfelt to one of the elaborately-got-up young ladies standing behind the archæological sandwiches and stale maids of honor on the counter, as he entered the refreshment room; and, as he handed the Stygian-looking flood in a large blue bucket-shaped cup to Mrs. Pemble, the whole room suddenly became vocal with many sounds and much movement, like an *émeute* waking up in a silent city of a morning. This was occasioned by the entrance of two ladies—one a full-blown dowager, of full sixty years of equally-divided summers and winters, with an amount of resolute and indomitable beauty that, up to a certain point, seemed to have bid defiance to both. This lady, though large, was languishing, and consequently was all Cashmeres, *casolettes*, *flacons*, and flounces. The other was a lovely girl of eighteen, with the figure of a sylph and the face of a Hebe. Her luxuriant hair, of the darkest possible chestnut, was wreathed in thick cable plaits round her beautifully-shaped head, which, thanks to the present fashion of wearing the bonnets on the shoulders, could be seen to the greatest advantage. In the delicate outline of her faultless features there was a harmony that made of her whole face a concerted loveliness of form, colour, and expression that was irresistible. Hackneyed as the simile is, her skin was literally like snow, upon which blush rose-leaves seemed to have fallen. Her long-cut oriental-looking eyes were

"Deeply, darkly, beautifully blue,"

while their heavy, snowy, sleepy lids were fringed with long, black, silken lashes, that seemed to be continually trying to kiss her

cheeks, for which no one could possibly blame them. Her nose was white and transparent as ivory, with little *crève cœur* dimples at each tip. Then came the rich, red, pouting under, and the short, chiselled, *piquante* upper lip; the pearly, beautifully-arched teeth within them; the little, round, velvety chin; and the perfectly oval, peach-like cheeks. In short, any one with plenty of time and money at command, might have followed the advertising columns of *The Times*, and gone from "Piccadilly to Pera," or "May Fair to Marathon," and not seen so pretty a creature. The full-blown rose to which this bud belonged was followed by a whole procession of *suirants*, two of them being very tall footmen, whose hats being cased in oil-skin for travelling, and the powder pretty well blown out of their hair, gave them the appearance of being surmounted by a huge French plum; and to define their exact position in the procession, one might have been called *Rouge Croix*, inasmuch as he carried a large cushion of Berlin work, on which, upon a scarlet ground, were embroidered some armorial bearings, with supporters, surmounted by a coronet; while his companion might have deservedly acquired the *sobriquet* of *Blue Mantle*, on account of his carrying a velvet cloak of that colour. Bringing up the rear were two *soubiettes*—one unmistakably English, from her boa, boots, black veil, and other be-danglements, crowned with a convulsed look of supererogatory modesty, derived from the illusive idea that every one was looking at her; the other was as unmistakably French, from her very plain but symmetrically-fitting dark green merino dress, ditto gloves, small but not *outré* bonnet, perfectly smooth and well-arranged hair, and very neat little feet, in equally neat shoes, and open-worked thread stockings, while, neither impertinently nor boldly, her ubiquitous eyes looked at everybody and at everything. All these were the appendages of the great lady, for the young lady not only appeared to have the full use of her limbs, and be able to take care of herself, but further extended her *surveillance* to a little fluffy white Cuba dog that she carried under her arm, with a chime of little perforated golden bells round his neck, set off with *pompons* of blue ribbon.

No sooner was the great lady seated than *Rouge Croix* advanced and placed the coroneted cushion at her back, *Blue Mantle* following with a honeycomb lambswool squab for her feet. These arrangements completed, she said languidly, though not quite with a Parisian accent, to the French *femme de chambre*, "*Natalie, mon aumônier ?*"

"*Est-ce que milady ne lá pas ?*"

"*Ah ! c'est Meeses Tompkins qui lá soignée ce n'est pas moi.*"

"Nong Mumzelle, her ladyship, nong donny à me," disclaimed the boaed and booted Mrs. Tompkins.

"No, Tompkins, I've got it, *la voici Natalie*," interposed the young lady in a voice as sweet as her face, as she handed the little

green silk and steel head purse to her lady mother off of her pretty little wrist, where it had been dangling.

The commotion of this gorgeous *entrée* caused Mrs. Pemble to keep her cup of coffee in abeyance, and Sir Gregory Kempenfelt to raise his glass, the better to ascertain who and what this procession might be composed of; the great lady actually condescending to look around her, at the same time their eyes met, she bowing very graciously and saying, "How do, Sir Gregory?"

Letting his glass fall he raised his hat with an "Ah! how d'ye do, Lady de Baskerville?" as he went to shake hands with her. "The last place I should have expected to have had the honor of meeting you in—I mean on *this* line."

"One must do penance sometimes, and I never can get De Baskerville to interest himself about his Irish estates; and Purcell, his agent, has written over that he has some wonderful scheme for doubling the rental of Mount Andover—something about setting up a manufactory for peat, or poplins, or potatoes, or something, I don't exactly know what, only it's something with a P."

"The improvements on Irish estates are generally *pis allers*, I'm afraid," smiled Sir Gregory.

"Oh, no, I'm sure it was either poplin or peat that he said," rejoined Lady de Baskerville, who was *as* literal as England and Manchester could make her, and then added, with a yawn behind her handkerchief, "Are you going to Ireland too?"

"No, I'm going down to Baron's Court."

"Oh! I don't think you know my youngest daughter, Sir Gregory? She was not out when you were in town two years ago."

"No, I have not that honor," said he, bowing low in just homage to the young divinity before him.

"Flo, dear, Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, an old friend of your poor papa's. My second daughter, Florinda, Sir Gregory."

"Then, I hope, as a friend of poor dear papa's, he will allow me to shake hands with him," replied she, holding out her pretty little hand to the old man with a winning grace that would have made her beautiful if she had been plain, but that, as it was, might have converted a stoic into an idolater.

"And may I hope," said he, his eyes sparkling as he gallantly raised her hand to his lips, "that, upon coming to my title of her father's friend, Lady Florinda Andover will allow me to kiss hands?"

But Pattapouffe, the Cuban apology for a poodle, being accosted to have all the kisses going, now set up a shrill bark, asserting his privileges, and voting against this innovation with all his lungs. The moment the laugh had subsided which his protest had occasioned, Lady Florinda, whose good breeding sprang from the right source, a good heart, seeing that Mrs. Pemble was left standing alone, said to her mother—

"I fear, mamma, we are detaining Sir Gregory Kempenfelt from the lady who is with him."

"Is it Miss Kempenfelt?" asked Lady de Baskerville. "Pray present us to her."

"No, it's not my sister, but a very great friend of mine; I wish she were my sister."

"Oh," said Lady de Baskerville, somewhat taken a-back, lest she should be imprudently risking an introduction to a nobody, for nobodys are human burrs—never to be got rid of when they fasten themselves on *somebody*. However, the episode of the St. James's theatre in 1847, when she *might* have forestalled all the *élite* of London by rescuing Louis Napoleon from the stalls, where he was *then* in the *wrong box*, and sheltering him in hers, and had not done so, had been a salutary, though too late lesson to her (as far as a *tabouret* at the Tuilleries went); and ever since, in all public places, she had made a point of remembering that most veracious adage, that "civility buys every thing and costs nothing."

Sir Gregory, who determined she should not solicit the *favour* of of being introduced to her nephew's neglected wife in vain, took the latter by the hand, and leading her forward, said—

"Lady de Baskerville, allow me to present to you my friend Mrs. Pemble—Lady de Baskerville—Lady Florinda Andover."

He watched her narrowly during this strange and unexpected, and, to her, nervous introduction; and though she could not prevent the truant and slighted blood mounting for a moment to her cheeks, yet was he charmed at the perfect self-possession and quiet thorough-bred ease with which she went through this trying ordeal; and certainly never was there a greater triumph of natural and hereditary superiority over that which is merely conventional and acquired; but that ease which was at first but assumed, though so well assumed as to defy detection from the most critical scrutiny, was soon made real by the charming Florinda, for while Lady de Baskerville was humming and hawing—having already forgotten the humble name of Pemble, though it was so like Penrhyn that one would think she *might* have remembered it—her daughter said, with one of her most enchanting smiles—

"Mrs. Pemble, I was admiring your courage in making such a gallant entry into the Black Sea just now; but as I am really in a state of starvation, and therefore ready to do anything, I want to hear your report of the soundings; in plain English, do you think I may venture upon a cup of that coffee, without adding another to the numerous poisoning cases, and implicating you in the affair?"

And so saying, she walked with Mrs. Pemble back to the counter, leaving Sir Gregory to entertain her mother, and thus with one kind little stratagem freed two persons from an awkward and uncomfortable *embarras*.

"Well," laughed Mrs. Pemble, "if you have ever been at Constantinople, and like your coffee *en vrai Turc*, you will have aniple

grounds for fancying *this* has been made at Stamboul, more especially as its scalding heat will prevent your being critical as to its aroma; but these rusks are really very good," added she, handing a plate of them to her beautiful companion.

"What a charming portrait you have there!" said Lady Florinda, bending forward to examine it, as she pantomimically sipped the *soi-disant* coffee.

"You will make me very vain," said the delighted mother with a smile, "for it is my son."

A blush of the most charming modesty suffused the beautiful girl's cheeks on hearing this, for, having none of the intense MAN-WORSHIP of most "British females" about her, she felt almost as unaffectedly abashed as if the original had been before her and she had inadvertently paid the same point-blank compliment to *him*; so, quickly adding, "it's so exquisitely painted," she immediately changed the subject to the usual common-place topics which form the staple of conversation with a new acquaintance, in the midst of which the train-bell rang, and beckoning to *Rouge Croix*, who had just re-appeared in the doorway, she told him to pay for the things she had had, and then, putting out her hand to Mrs. Pemble, said, "Having met, I am sorry we must part so soon, but I can only hope we may meet again."

But, seeing that her mother had taken Sir Gregory Kempenfelt's arm, she gracefully offered hers to Mrs. Pemble; "For," said she, "it seems, at least as far as the platform, that our way is the same."

"Will you allow me to carry your little dog for you?"

"Thanks, but I will not trouble you, as there would be two individuals to be consulted upon the transfer, and I know before-hand that Pattapouffe would decidedly object. I am quite of the old bachelor's way of thinking, who always, when his evil destiny led him to stay in a house where there were children, said he *preferred* naughty ones to good, because the naughty ones were *sure* to be turned out of the room, whereas there was no earthly chance of escape from the good ones. But unfortunately this rule does not extend to dogs, since the good ones, like good people, have every advantage taken of them; whereas, such spitfires as Master Pattapouffe, like biped tyrants and termagants, are sure to get their own way in all things, and bully the whole world; *à propos* of good people, what a dear old man Sir Gregory Kempenfelt appears!"

"Most excellent, indeed."

"You have known him a very long time, I suppose?"

"He was my father's oldest and best friend," rejoined Mrs. Pemble, telling the exact truth, though not the whole truth, and thereby jesuitically avoiding to compromise her veracity as to the chronology of her *own* acquaintance with him.

Though they were hurrying along with the stream that was flowing towards the platform as fast as they could, Blue Mantle now appeared, clearing the human tide on all sides as he elbowed

his way through the crowd, and at length got near enough to say, by leaning over the clerical hat of a Right Reverend prelate, as the devil is said to overlook Lincoln Cathedral, "My lady begged I would tell your ladyship that she's afraid you'll be late, as she is already in the carriage."

"Here, Murray, take Pattapouffe, and tell mamma that I'm coming as fast as I can."

And when they had advanced in sight of the carriage in which Lady de Baskerville was seated, Sir Gregory standing beside the open door talking to her, Lady Florinda again hastily shook hands with Mrs. Pemble and hurried on to join her mother, who, not at all liking the intimacy she had *improvisé* with a person *they knew nothing about*, not *morally* but *socially*—for, for aught they knew, she might have been a tradesman's daughter, like Lady de Baskerville herself, only without a coronet to conceal the ugly fact—

"My dear Flo, how very imprudent you are, lagging so behind," were the maternal *words*; but the *tone* it was in which they were uttered which, like Hebrew points, gave them their real meaning, which the daughter knew full well, was, "How can you make acquaintance with persons before you know *who* they are, and *what* they have—where they live—and, above all, the set they are in."

But as her mother's thoughts were not *sensé* to require an answer, she turned a callous face to them, but a very cordial one to Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, as she shook hands with him as soon as she was seated, saying:—

"I won't say good bye, so it must be *au revoir*."

"With all my heart! *anywhere* to meet Lady Florinda Andover, even *au reservoir*! as a certain lady is reported to make assignations with her friends."

"*Fie donc!* Sir Gregory, that is very *iron-ical*;" and while she laughed, Lady de Baskerville made a dignified and distant bow to Mrs. Pemble, as much as to say, "There, stay where you are, and don't presume upon Florinda's thoughtless folly and approach *me* any nearer."

And the guard coming the next moment to lock up this precious casket carriage, that contained a real peeress and allegorical strawberry-leaves, Sir Gregory handed Mrs. Pemble into the next but one, which luckily they had all to themselves.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed he, as soon as they were seated; "how little does poor Lady de Baskerville dream how

'More than kin and less than kind'

she has been to you this morning; but I must say you got through that introduction most marvellously, and you made the quicksilver of my conceit rise so high that I felt as proud of you as if I had unlimited shares in your good breeding; and so indeed I have, if you succeed in imparting a tithe of it to May and Linda, for I take

good manners to be the available currency of a capital of good breeding, which is equal to whatever run may be made upon it."

"Oh! my dear Sir Gregory, I begin to think that all the romance of my life has been reserved for my old age and a romantic elderly lady!—*ça donne un peu dans le ridicule!* But it was only the beginning of the week that I fell in with you in the most extraordinary and unforeseen manner imaginable and by the merest chance; and now again this morning the *rencontre* with 'my Aunt Dofa,' as poor Penrhyn used to call her!"

"My dear lady, you may rely upon two things; first, that *Truth* is invariably stranger than Fiction; for Fiction affects the *vrai semblable*, in order to keep the unities, which Truth—that is *Reality*, both in characters and events—often boldly disdains to do. Could we but unroll the polygrammic papyrus of *every* life from the first birth of Time, we should, from world-old proofs, be convinced of this. Next, that there is no such thing as *Chance*. I like, because I fully subscribe to it, that graphic expression of Wordsworth's, "the *procession* of our fate," for it implies that every situation and circumstance of it is marshalled by a Higher Power—for the pageant, in fact, is God's, and what we call Time and Fate are merely His heralds, who see to and superintend the proper acting, dressing, and timing of the incidents which go to the development and *dénouement* of the solemn "morality" we call Life. That those incidents should be all *misjudged* mysteries to us is no wonder, since even in human matters, which can be investigated and compared, and consequently summed up and judged, we are eternally falsifying, by fragmentary and *ex parte* decisions, and the precipitancy with which we mar the order of things: it is *only* Omnipotence that can *WILL* events into existence. All human good, to deserve the name, must be *progressive*: the physical world teaches this great lesson to the moral one, if we would but learn it. We sow our grain to-day, but it is useless to go with scythes and reapers to-morrow to cut down the wheat that has not yet sprung up. Long must the seed be hidden, and seemingly rot and wither before it can germinate and fructify—for all things have their appointed stages. Euclid neither invented nor solved a problem the day after he had mastered his letters; and Sir Isaac Newton ate many apples before he discovered the gravitation of the world; oars were invented before sails, rudders before compasses, and all and each of them before steam; Magna Charta preceded Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform by many centuries; and now, because the dark barbaric old social fabric, built for expediency long ago in the night of ages, is *beginning* to fall in and crumble about us, and so lets in light through its ruined crevices sufficient to *detect* all its defects, and we *talk* incessantly about them, straight we wisely wonder that constantly animadverting upon them has not already raised up a new, more commodious, and more healthy edifice. We *talk* religion, we *talk* morality,

we *talk* justice, we *talk* intellectual progression, and indeed make more way in that than in anything else; we *talk* National Schools, we *talk*, as our individual bias may set, CHRISTIAN, Sectarian, or Sadducee Sabbaths, and we have peers, parliament-men, and all Grub Street, lecturing about the country, more, it is to be feared, from vanity than virtue; but *still*—no thanks to *them*—they are doing good; for they are, unknown to themselves, working in their vocation; for as no house can be built without a certain amount of rubbish for its basement, so is the legislative, legal, literary, and municipal TALK of one century the foundation-stuff upon which the solid fabrics of its successors are raised. Only consider how many hundred years it has taken us to TALK Christianity; but the millenium *will* come at last, when every one will *act* as Christians; the *few* who have the courage and the conscience to do so *now* are looked upon either as insane or as great oddities, because they *are* ripe *before the time*, as we are still in the transition stage of *theory*."

"And a most disagreeable stage it is," said Mrs. Pemble, "for it causes that total want of all sincerity and reality, which is the master-curse of this age. People do not now disseminate opinions because, being strongly imbued with and convinced by them, they are overflowing with them, and are therefore *impelled* to take the initiative in propagating them and proselytizing others; on the contrary, they invariably *wait* to see which bubble lasts the longest—in a word, which is the *most* popular, in sects, science, politics, literature, or art—and *then*, goaded by an insane craving for *notoriety*, they immediately set about adding *their* individual breath to its inflation."

"All true, but still without any such high intent, they *are* doing a work of utility, just as the poor rooks, who are so ungratefully shot by the farmers for the few grains they purloin, nevertheless render *them* and the rest of the community an incalculable service in the number of pernicious grubs and worms they destroy; so in like manner, whoever serves, though merely as an *echo*, to point out an ABUSE, or though only as a parrot to proclaim a TRUTH, is most unquestionably the right man in the right place. This is a *railing* age, exclusive of steam, and the system of universal fault-finding now going on is only the preliminary breaking up of inconvenient old roads, to prepare them for a better train of things; for it is a maxim of philosophers, that truths are oftener discovered by their contraries than in any other way, and that when there are but a certain number of accidents or causes from which a thing can arise, we shall make as many advances at the discovering *which* is *right*, as we give explanations of *which* is *wrong*. Consequently, if there are *but* six causes, which *can* have place in producing an event, and we show five do *not* effect it, we may be sure the sixth *does*, without more inquiry; and our social machine, difficult as the rust of neglect and the cobwebs of ignorance have made it to work, is not so complex after all but that it *must* have a

mainspring, and, *that once found* and kept thoroughly lubricated by public opinion, the dirty rags of cant, humbug, self-interest, manna worship, Brummagem philanthropy, with all their motley patches of other vices with which we are now continually plying it, *must* come out at last—the smooth, white, spotless pages fit for the age of *DEEDS*, when there will be *justice* without *law*, and Christianity without sects; the Sabbatarian controversy itself having ended in those Right Reverend Fathers in God (whose ideas of Sabbath sanctity consist in Sabbath stagnation,) breakfasting off of dry bread and dining off ditto; walking to church three times a day, in all weathers, and sending their carriages to the workhouse to convey to the sacred edifice those poor old phthisicky paupers, whose devotion might not only be damped by the elements, but to whom wet feet and wet clothes would be certain death, and so burden the parish with the charge of their obsequies. Nay more, in the age of *deeds*, I can fancy the regenerated looking back to our present bituminously barbaric ecclesiastical laws (which are not only a disgrace but a ridicule to any *soi-disant* civilized country) with as much wondering horror as we now do to the female flesh and blood traffic* under the Heptarchy,

* Alas! that it should be so; but, succeeding ages, like contemporary individuals, can always see the notes in their predecessors' eyes without even suspecting the beams in their own; and that the nineteenth century, up to the very recent period of March the 24th, 1856, *has* very *beaming* eyes, will be amply proved by the following and hereto-appended, admirable, able, and fearlessly true letter of "A. J." to *The Times*. Oh! that England had more A. J.'s and fewer "*females!*"—and then she would have WOMEN to appeal to, for there *are* plenty of *good*, honest and honorable men to make common cause with them against the chartered band of leprous profligates, who promote and have organized by their own studied, invented and irresponsible vices, this revolting and disgraceful state of our *moral* society. A. J. asks, "Shall we stone those who minister to vice, and spare those who practise it?" God forbid; but were a law passed that these vile free-trade *intermediaires* should be branded on the forehead with the old scarlet letter (only not one taken so far down in the alphabet) unless they gave up the names of their employers and patrons, depend upon it it would soon stop *this* branch of infamy. The only fear is, that the awful *exposé* that it might give rise to amongst some of our literary-politico Lycurguses and self-styled moralists (Heaven save the mark!) would effectually throw out the bill, and prevent their voting for so suicidal a measure. However, though we may, I fear, de-pair of this salutary revival of a scarlet letter, those of A. J. should be graven by gratitude on every woman's heart in England. But gratitude is a plant of slow and uncertain growth, especially when raised from the seed of immeasurable benefits. Laurels are for those who fight *with* the mass; but those who have the isolated and god-like courage to lead the forlorn hope of a great social TRUTH against a GREAT SOCIAL EVIL must only expect the stones or the saggot of the martyr; for truly says Sir Walter Raleigh—"There is no mistress or guide that hath led her followers and servants into greater misfortunes and miseries than TRUTH; he that goes after her too far off loseth her sight and loseth himself, and he that shall follow her too near the heels she may haply strike out his teeth." But, in spite of our teeth,

when every peasant girl could be seized at will by the commercial travellers of the slave merchants, to sell at Bristol, Lewes, or any other mart, and outraged at their pleasure; for if about to become mothers they brought a higher price in the market, till this infernal human traffic was put a stop to by Ina, the 'wisest, virtuous, best' of all the Saxon kings, not excepting Alfred. Yes,

let us persevere, noble-minded A. J., and heed no more the vituperations of the vicious and the hypocritical than Luther and Melancthon did the anathemas of the Monks. If our much boasted liberty of the press were a *reality*, and not a solemn sham, like marriage vows for men, professing one thing and meaning another—that is, diametrically opposite—then, indeed, by a public appeal to the justice and mercy of the mass, women, by exposing the cowardly persecutions with which some are hunted by their slave-owners, might end them: but no, "truth is a libel," that is to say—an unvarnished statement of revolting facts with their proofs appended; for the nucleus of both our social and legal code is the protection and screening of masculine vice, which is ever held, more especially by the cant of conventionality, as a thing too sacred to be even alluded to; and in that cant every profligate finds a safe and impregnable citadel. Yes, were there really a free press, wrongs, when too outrageous, could no longer skulk in darkness, for causes *will* produce effects, and commensurate effects too; if the cause be unparalleled, the effect must be unprecedented, and there comes to individuals, as to nations, a culminating point of misery and outrage, which produces revolution—the only difference between the two being that in the nation it is a wholesale butchery, while with the individual it is a mortal single combat, but yet one for which even the weakest woman so outraged has all that heroism can give or exigency require; and the very point where cowardice retreats and quails is that where courage penetrates and *conquers*, for

"L'imprudence n'est pas dans la temerite,
Elle est dans un projet faux, et mal concerte,
Mais s'il est bien suivi c'est un trait de prudence,
Que d'aller quelque fois jusques a l'insolence,

« plus imperieux,
Qu'il faut souvent moins
D'art que de mepris pour eux."

"THE TRAFFIC IN WOMEN.

"To the Editor of The Times.

"Sir,—In a leading article of *The Times* (Thursday, March 20), you have commented with just horror and indignation on the infamous traffic in young girls, at this time carried on to a greater extent than can be conceived or believed by those who sit at home, intrenched round by all the sanctities of domestic life and all the safeguards of virtue. In the course of the judicial inquiry which gave rise to your remarks, it was stated publicly that this traffic has become a "system," and a source of profit; that the law cannot reach it, and that without the intervention of our Foreign Minister it is not likely to be put down.

"That such an infamous traffic does exist has long been well known to me and to others. Not only is it true that English girls are inveigled out of this country in such numbers that, as I remember, an association was formed in Paris to protect them; but it is not less true that for the same horrible purpose girls are brought over to England from France, from Bel-

I can fancy the incredible horror with which English people living under a more advanced state of Christian equity will look back to these our times, when marriage vows are merely deemed sacred for women, at least among the higher orders, and when men can not only violate them with impunity, but with triumph; and the more revoltingly profligate they are, and the more notoriously infa-

gium, from Germany; it is, in fact, a trade under all the conditions of export and import—a trade which, if not legalized, is tolerated; and I have myself heard it, I will not say defended, but accounted for, excused as the necessary, inevitable result of certain permitted social vices. When several trials relative to these foreign victims were reported two or three years ago, and sent a strong shudder of horror and disgust through our virtuous society, *The Times* was blamed by some persons for the publicity given to the circumstances and the severity of its comments; but others who recoiled from such details felt wisely grateful for the exposure of such unmanly vice, and for the manly scorn and detestation with which it was visited.

“In this recent case, not women only, but all right-minded and generous men have reason to thank you for the part you have taken. You conclude your denunciation by an appeal to English women, and (printing the word in capitals to enforce your appeal) you require that Englishwomen should ‘lay to heart’ such a state of things, and use their utmost power to stop the progress of this enormous wrong.

“I am an Englishwoman, and in common with many other Englishwomen, feel the shame and horror of such a state of things; but will you, who thus appeal to us, or will any of your correspondents point out what it is our duty to do?—how we are expected to act, to speak, or even to think on such subjects? We have been told heretofore by men whom we respect, that it becomes women to be absolutely silent on such revolting topics—to ignore, or rather to affect to ignore, such a ‘state of things’ as you allude to. We have been told that in virtuous women it is a breach of feminine delicacy even to suppose the existence of certain outcasts of our own sex, or of certain exemptions in regard to vicious indulgence assumed by yours; in short, that, as women of virtue, we have nothing to do with such questions, though we know, too well, how deeply they affect us, how terribly near they approach us personally, how the far-reaching contagion of such covert vice involves in some form or other the peace of our ‘virtuous’ homes, the fidelity of our husbands, the health and morality of our sons, the innocence of our daughters. We have been allowed, indeed, to patronise penitentiaries, to read chapters of the Bible, and distribute lugubrious tracts to wretched, sullen, disordered victims; but, meantime, we are told—I have myself been told, half pityingly, half sneeringly—that for every one unhappy creature we rescue out of the streets, two will be at once supplied to fill up the vacancy; that this ‘state of things’ is a necessary social evil; and that we virtuous women had better not meddle with it, lest worse befall us.

“So it has been said in former times; but it seems, from the appeal you make to us, that in these days Englishwomen may feel, may think, may speak out on such subjects; may, without reproach, take such a part in their discussion as becomes the members of a Christian and civilized community. But what are we to do, where law is weak, where custom is strong, where opinion is cowardly or wavering, where our very knowledge involves an imputation on our feminine decorum—what are we to do? A popular journal, in reference to this trial, intimated that where the law cannot reach them it is permitted to take the chastisement of such vile panders and

mously they have behaved to one woman, the more they are run after and adulated by your regular 'British Female;' and when, no matter what amount of moral and physical brutalization a woman receive from her legal slaveholder—no matter with what complex conspiracy of utter blackguardism she may be hunted by him—no matter how inhumanly deserted—no desertion can loosen *her* fetters, no amount of wrong be sufficient to procure *her* redress, unless, indeed, she has sufficient money, and, above all, sufficient *interest* to get her emancipation hocus-pocussed through the House of Lords, at the fiat of a set of superannuated adulterers; and, *most* monstrous of all, as regards these said ecclesiastical laws, when cruelty has branded with cupidity on its unnatural statutes, that 'A MOTHER IS NO RELATION TO HER CHILD!!!'

"Ah! my dear Sir, *that* is the only part of your prophecy that I don't think will ever come to pass, at least in England; for in every other country the era of the elevation of women to the position of rational and responsible human beings and co-equal heirs of immortality has already dawned. But you must recollect that injustice to our sex began with the world, and it is the *one* tradition that men most inviolately preserve. The ridiculous doctrine of Aristotle and Almericus that the female sex was an error in nature, and that had not Adam sinned the whole human race would have been men, created immediately from God as the first man was, was not one whit too ridiculous for the Fathers of the early Church to push still further, by maintaining that at the general resurrection, women, as imperfect animals, would be finished and perfectionized (?) by being transmuted into men, so that then Grace would complete the work which Nature had so blunderingly

procureesses into our own hands. Does this mean that they should be pilloried or pummelled to death in our public streets? I believe this would be their fate if they were once recognized; but where would be the justice of it? Shall we stone those who minister to vice, and spare those who practise it? That class of wretches whose sole and profitable occupation it is to hunt down and ensnare victims becomes, we are told, more and more numerous, more and more audacious; but for whom are the victims hunted down and ensnared, imported and exported as so much merchandise? So long as the market exists the article will be supplied. Tell us, therefore, what are we to do? The education of your sons does not rest with us. In the schools where boys are collected together, generally far out of the reach of pure, healthy female society and influence, the first thing they learn is to despise girls; and the second, to regard the impetticoated half of the human species as destined for their service or their pleasure. Hence in the higher and better educated classes early impressions which lead to the most selfish and cruel mistakes in regard to the true position of women, and in the lower more ignorant classes, to the most terrible tyranny and brutality. Against the latter, it is said, our Legislature is preparing stringent measures; but against the former what is to defend us? I speak in the name of Englishwomen to whom you have appealed, and ask counsel and help from generous and thoughtful men—what are we to do?

"Ealing, March 24, 1856."

"A. J."

gun. It is true that St. Augustine, in his *De Civitate Dei*,* proposes this, though I confess I rather incline to it, not, indeed, as a matter of grace, but as a doctrine of *compensation*."

"Pooh! and who are the men, from the beginning of the world whether Jewish Rabbis or Pagan philosophers—who tried most lower women in the scale of humanity and depreciate them morally, but those who, like Aristotle and Euripides, were the most notorious profligates? and certainly a profligate, considering the sources from whence he naturally draws his inferences, *cannot* have any opinion of women but a vicious and a degraded one. Plutarch indeed affects a charitable incredulity touching some of Aristotle's worst debaucheries; but I confess I am so uncharitable with regard to all this sort of gentry, that I incline more readily to accept as truth the anything but favourable version given of his morals (!) by Theocritus, the Chian, who was his contemporary, in reference to Plutarch's version, who lived so long after him. But leaving all this, to show the consistency of philosophers, the prudent manner in which Aristotle blazoned not only all the moral, but also all the physical defects of women, did not prevent his being a most uxorious husband to both his wives; and indeed to Pythais, his first wife, his impious folly reached the height of offering incense to her as to a divinity—so that one can only conclude that, like most men who are IMMORALLY the abject slaves of your sex, whenever he met with a rebuff, he became their most inscrupulous satirist. But it is curious to mark how every extravagant absurdity in the moral and intellectual world has its *pendent* in the physical and scientific one; for precisely the same paramount theory of the super-excellence of the male sex, broached by the twelfth-century Paris Doctor Almericus, Aristotle, and the fathers, which you allude to, was also held by the alchymists, with regard to metals—at least a parallel doctrine; for they actually asserted that Nature *always intended* the generation of gold, and, through sheer defect, stops in another and inferior metal, which, say they, *their* art has alone the secret of remedying. But, to tell you the truth, the chief barrier that I see in England to the amelioration of the social position of women is, the narrow selfishness and vapid inanity of the women themselves—a state of things which the egotism and mammon-worship and the un-self-relying system of their purblind education, does everything not only to create, but to increase."

"There I quite agree with you, for the generality of women in this country, unless they happen to be personally brutalized themselves, have no *esprit de corps* or sympathy for other women; and indeed those who are among the victims of the disgracefully one-sided ecclesiastical laws, only know how to complain, but do not know either how to resist or to redress, and for the most part

seem to cling to the parcel of passive endurance and total ignorance which men have allotted to them, with a sort of superstitious fanaticism."

"Aye, like that of Queen Mary (who, by the bye, with all her faults, being more of a woman than her execrable sister Elizabeth, did not deserve the sanguinary *sobriquet* attached to her name half as much as her all-vice of a sister). Don't you remember, when Ridley called on her at Hunsdon, on his return from Cambridge, when she was Princess Mary, and after dinner asked her permission to preach before her the following Sunday, she continued for some time silent, a gloomy shade passing over her countenance, and at length she replied, 'As for this matter, I pray you, my lord, make the answer yourself.' 'Madam,' said he, 'I trust you will not refuse God's word.' 'I cannot tell,' she rejoined, 'what you call God's word. That is not God's word now that was God's word in my father's day.' Whereupon the bishop observed that God's word is ONE AT ALL TIMES, but had been better understood and practised in some ages than others, upon which she could restrain her anger no longer, but said, 'You durst not for your ears have avouched that for God's word in my father's days that you do now.' And then, to show how competent a judge she was in the controversy, she added, 'As for your new books, I thank God I never read any of them; I never did, and I never will; and upon this rational and logical model, with regard to a bigoted and uninvestigating adhesion to all long-established and conventionally-patented errors, your genuine 'British Female' is to this day 'constructed.'"

"That arises from their intense man-worship," said Mrs. Pemble; "and in order to adulate their lords and masters the more, and thereby insure a few temporary and trumpery personal and individual immunities, they are always the most active in endeavouring to keep down their sex, and in swelling the hue and cry against bloomerism and strong-minded women. Since that is the jack-boot, pugilistic sort of nicknames the present age has hit upon wherewith to brand all women two degrees removed from idiocy, and who have sufficient moral courage to think and to act rightly, although in so doing they may be in a vituperated minority."

"And don't you know why? Men, with a very few rare exceptions, that prove the rule, have no moral courage; consequently there is nothing they dread so much, as it awes them quite as effectually as the fixedly determined gaze of a sane person does a lunatic, and from the same cause, that both are the triumph of reason over the reverse. Therefore men have agreed, by the calumnious ridicule of affecting to confound moral courage with physical violence in a woman, and branding all who possess it as shrews and termagants, to endeavour, if possible, to lapidate it out of the catalogue of female virtues; the superior virtues they arrogate to themselves being prudence and 'common sense;' and

there never yet was a person revolting from his avarice who did not dignify that mean, miserable vice with the name of '*prudence*,' or one cautious to pusillanimity who did not plume himself on his '*common sense*.' I think it is Freyjo, that very sagacious old Spanish philosopher, who says that 'much which is called prudence in men is fallacy, deceit, and treachery, which is a great deal worse than even that indiscreet frankness with which women sometimes manifest their hearts; for though the latter may sin against the rules of prudence, it is *good*, considered as a *symptom*, inasmuch as that no one is ignorant of their own proper vices, and those who find any great amount of such in themselves shut up carefully all the crannies of their heart; moreover, nobody ever made the golden age to consist of prudent men, but of candid ones; because then it was to be supposed that, having no ugly things to hide, men could afford to be candid.' But to return to those said ecclesiastical laws, though women have a much greater and deeper stake in them, inasmuch as that women, however deserted, are still fettered if they are women of principle and *termagants* with moral courage to resist all the snares by which they are compassed, whereas neither the laws of God nor man fetter our sex, if it be their pleasure to have recourse to the skeleton key of vice to break through every barrier, and their doing so never injures them in Church, State, or Society; on the contrary, I think I may with truth assert that in '*moral England*' the more shamelessly profligate and immoral a man's *private* character is, the more he flourishes in that clap-trap bubble called public life. And yet for the last two centuries *men* have been beginning to kick against the iniquitous costliness of the ecclesiastical laws, which prevents any but a rich man getting rid of a frail rib; but there is not a word of compassion for a poor woman not being able to get rid of, or even to get any redress for any amount of infamy a brute of a husband may think fit to inflict upon her! But all this is upon the same equitable and one-sided principle that if a man catches his wife with a paramour, and in his indignation slays them both, it is justifiable homicide!—but if a poor, wretched woman has her house polluted and herself outraged by having her husband's mistresses brought into it, or better still, is turned out of it to make way for them, *she* is only ridiculed if she winces under it, and excommunicated by the canons of English conventionality if she complains of it! But of all the one-sided fallacies, that which amuses me the most is the old-established masculine palliation of masculine sin, in contradistinction to the unpardonableness of the slightest refraction of their sin in women; for God of course is put entirely out of the question, further than as a God of vengeance to redress the wrongs of injured husbands, by executing judgment upon women. 'Oh!' say we lords of the creation, 'the reason adultery is a so much more heinous crime in *women*, and only a venal peccadillo in us is, that a woman may bring a spurious

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race into her husband's family.' Very true; and that is precisely the reason WHY GOD HAS FORBIDDEN THAT SIN. But pray, when my Lord A. intrigues with my Lady B., and my Lord A. returns the compliment, or else goes farther in the alphabet, does not my Lord A. inflict a spurious progeny on my Lord B.? to say nothing of colonizing Brighton, Brompton, and the German Baths with other spurious offshoots, who, though their victim-mothers may have been nobodies, yet *they*, still in their turn, had fathers' and mothers' hearts to break by their delinquency, although they were *not* Lords and Ladies. So that when this grand and, as they think, clenching argument comes to be summed up it amounts to this:—'It is a crime,' says my Lord B., 'of the blackest die for Lord A. to bring dishonor into *my* family, and one for which Lady B. at least deserves to be broken on the wheel, and afterwards thrown *à la* Jezebel to the dogs, as she has chosen to go there. It is true I have often played the same game in Lord C.'s household, and have over-populated Joneses, Smiths, and Browns without end; so that I have been obliged, with the expense I have been at in hushing up these 'little affairs' alone, to screw my wife and my legitimate incumbrances down to the lowest possible figure. But *that is very different; men will be men.*'

"I fear so to the end of the chapter," sighed Mrs. Pemble, "for, as you say, that is precisely their fallacious argument, and equally fallacious self-extenuation for making and breaking laws as they please."

"For a 'moral country,' as we call ourselves, vice, and more particularly that particular vice, holds strange sway among us, and the reason is evident: both laws and punishments, to be effectual, must be *two-sided*; it is for that reason that the sword of justice is represented as a two-edged one; but as our social and ecclesiastical laws *now* stand, it would be just as wise to enable a father, at pleasure, to murder his children; but making it death by torture for a child to murder his parent. Such an iniquitous law might and *would create* parricides, but never would or could prevent parricide; for evil out of evil ever springs, directly or indirectly; and, in like manner, till religion ceases to be considered, as it at present is by our legislators, as a *mere necessary pin in the wheel of the State*, and men are brought to *believe* that it is quite as heinous and as judgment-entailing for *them* to violate God's law, *premeditatedly and spontaneously*, as it is for weak, silly women to be betrayed, cajoled, or entrapped into doing so, there will or can be no such thing as *real* morality among us. Why, even in Sparta, where they had neither the light nor the law of Christianity, they had more sense, and infinitely more justice, for, like parricide, they looked upon adultery in *either* sex as a crime so horrible that they had no law whereby to punish it, thus paying the Spartans the compliment of believing it impossible, for we all know the story of the Spartan, who, being asked by a stranger, 'What was

the punishment for adulterers?' replied, 'We are *not* acquainted with such a crime in Sparta.' 'But suppose,' persisted the stranger, 'that such a crime were actually committed, what *would* be the penalty?' 'The adulteress,' answered he, 'must give to the injured party an ox ^{with} a neck long enough to reach over the mountain ^{from} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~other~~ side.' 'But it is impossible,' said the stranger, smiling, 'to find such an ox.' 'It is just *as* possible,' replied Garadas, the Spartan, 'as to find an adulterer among us.' And even in ancient Rome, not certainly during the dynasty of those 'clever men,' the Cæsars, but at one period of her Commonwealth, for six hundred years the crime was unknown; so that the solitary instance, at the end of that time, of Corvilius Spurius repudiating his wife, has sent his name down to posterity. But among us, if ever there is a little gentle whispering about framing a law for the protection of women, it either carefully avoids going to the *moral* root of the question, or else quietly dies out as a pargery beneath the notice of the legislature. And, such being the case, I confess I never see a lovely young creature—one of Heaven's best hostages for making a right-minded, noble-hearted woman, like that charming girl we have just parted from, for instance—that I do not shudder to think *what* her fate *may* be; for certain it is, and sad as true, that the darkest fates are generally meted out in this world to the fairest women—I mean fair within as well as without."

"Ah! is she not lovely? I can't tell you how my heart warmed to her, and how I longed to throw my arms about her neck, and tell her I had a right to do so."

"And why did you not?"

"No, no; I know my 'etiquette to ladies,' and for governesses better than that; and I assure you the timely recollection of my position passed between her and me like the cold, deadly, but all-conquering shade of Theseus on Marathon, and at once smote me down into my lower sphere of poor relation."

"Though infinitely better born than the relation by marriage you were speaking to, yet I cannot, in truth, say better bred; as Lady Florinda is really a most charming girl, who would even provoke a *mother-in-law* to love her, and fascinate a son-in-law into almost forgetting that her mother was a *parvenu* to the uttermost length and breadth of the term."

"My dear Sir Gregory," smiled Mrs. Pemble, "you forget that Lady de Baskerville's father and brother, the worthy Manchester druggists, were also my husband's father and grandfather."

"Aye! and, above all, we must *not* forget our *Morning Post* and *Court Journal*, or Court Booby Jumper, as it ought to be called, by not at the same time taking into the account the chymistry of heraldry, which has transmuted the *çi-devant* Lancashire witch, Miss Dora Penrhyn, into a countess."

"Who, to do her justice, has gone beyond the ancestral chymis-

try, and achieved a perfect alchymistic *tour de force* in that golden girl of hers."

"Granted; and what charming manners she has!—which assort with her beauty as well as her ribbons did with her complexion."

"Yes, and in England, I am sorry to say, charming manners are far more rare than charming faces."

"Do you know, the only good that I can contemplate as resulting from this horrid war is that the fusion with the French will shame us out of our accursed selfishness; which, after all, is the real mildew of our manners, as well as of our morals."

"And, above all, I hope it will shame us out of our rusty cant of attributing a superficial hollowness to the never-failing politeness of the French; for look at the accounts of their tenderness, generosity, and abnegation of self, amid all the horrible privations and perils of the Crimea; and while in hugging our own bearishness we sneer at this charm of manner, it is to be hoped that we shall have both the gratitude and the generosity to sneer no longer, when we find that though it is guilty of lending grace to a ball-room, it positively gives an additional glory to a battle-field."

"My good lady, the *grace* is the very thing we don't forgive, for, being unable to emulate it, we find it shorter and sharper to call it insincerity; and yet it is this very grace which gives the guinea-stamp of value to every kindness and to every compliment. I believe no one ever thought Napoleon the First a fop or a fribble; yet I can remember when I, as a lad of eighteen, being in Paris with my tutor, for the *fêtes* in celebration of the peace of Amiens, Lord Cornwallis, who was our Ambassador on the occasion, upon going on the day they commenced to the Tuilleries, was greatly surprised not to see another vehicle or equipage of any description in the usually over-crowded streets but his own. Upon expressing his surprise at this singular and very unwonted circumstance, he was then for the first time informed that the First Consul had given orders that no carriage (including his own) but that of the English Ambassador should be allowed to traverse the streets of Paris during the crowded throng, collected by the *fêtes*. Lord Cornwallis said, as well he might, that it was the finest, because the most delicate, compliment he had ever received in his life."

"Charming!" said Mrs. Pemble; "truly, as you say, the grace is the guinea-stamp. I suppose you know that anecdote of Dr. Young straying into the French camp during the war in Flanders?"

"No, I do not. You mean the Night Thoughts Dr. Young?"

"Yes."

"Pray let me hear it."

"Well, I think that was another instance of the grace with which they enhance a favour. Dr. Young, during the then war in Flanders, attended the English army as almoner. One day, being deeply absorbed in a volume of *Æschylus*, he entered in his reverie the camp of the enemy; he was disagreeably surprised at finding

himself seized as a spy, and taken before the French General. Dr. Young informed him of his name, upon which the *Maréchal* bowed and said 'that was a name fame had long made known to him,' and thereupon had refreshments brought, entertained him with the greatest distinction, and finally had him led out of the camp by a guard of honor."

"Just like them! Had a French author, of fifty times Dr. Young's celebrity, and a hundred times his genius, strayed into our camp, provided we had ever heard of his name, and were convinced he was only guilty of the minor crime of authorship, and was *not* a spy, we might have said, 'Let the poor devil go;' but as for *fêteing* and feasting him, and sending him out of the camp with a guard of honor, we are by far too much occupied with ourselves, whether in peace or war, to waste so much time and trouble on another, and that other an enemy. But, to return to what I was saying, as to the want of moral courage which exists in us men as a rule—I am now going honestly to confess that I, Gregory Kempenfelt, old soldier though I be, am no exception to that rule; and I assure you I would rather mount a breach any day than incur one with my sister Charity; and it is astonishing the little temporizings, half measures, and tergiversations my pusillanimity is guilty of, rather than have the courage to brave the storm, by owing to her at *first* any little hitch in the family cabinet, that *must* be owned at *last*."

"Ah, my dear Sir Gregory! you are indeed no exception to the rule; but what strikes me as most strange in this want of moral courage in men is, that they not only succumb, not to say cower, to regular despotic viragoes, but are far more tolerant to, and of, them than they are of the slightest resolution and strength of character in other women, however trampling and outrage may have goaded them into an honest resistance and aroused this dormant firmness. As to the termagant by nature and practice, they seldom apply any opprobrious epithets, but suffer and submit in silence; whereas, for the woman who has no constitutional ill-temper, only a lion-hearted moral courage to resist, by exposing, the autocratic villany that may have become too dastardly for even a worm to bear without turning upon the superior, but cowardly, she which attempts, under the warrant of impunity, to crush it, her vocabulary contains sufficient vituperatives, or no rubric sufficient anathemas, not only to satisfy the particular lord of the passion opposed, but all his peers, who, considering that if ever women are allowed even the most feeble resistance under such circumstances, or the slightest freedom of speech, *their* fiat omni-potence as the superior sex will be considerably jeopardized, and therefore they instantly make common cause of it, and join in doing all *they* can, by calumny, invective, and the projectiles of battering-rams of 'vixens,' 'furies,' 'devils,' 'tartars,' and **STRONG-MINDED WOMEN**, to blacken and blight such insubordinate spirits."

"Very true; and yet in signalling out some, alas! too many of you, for victims and martyrs to THE PRIVILEGES OF OUR ORDER, it is yet a great compliment we, in spite of ourselves, are paying you *as a sex*. There is an exquisite piece of verbal enamel painting in Ruskin's 'Modern Painters,' not on copper, but on grass. I know no gem like it in ancient or modern prose or verse. It has about it all the freshness of the daisy, all the sweetness of the violet, all the pureness of the morning dew, and all the truth of the nature to which, like the kisses of a south wind, it gives back to the full as many charms as it has borrowed from it. After much that is equally beautiful, he says, 'Look up towards the higher hills, where the waves of everlasting green roll silently into their long inlets among the shadows of the pines; and we may perhaps at last know the meaning of those quiet words of the 147th Psalm, 'He maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains.' There are also several lessons symbolically connected with this subject which we must not allow to escape us. Observe the peculiar characters of the grass which *adapt it especially for the service of man*, are its apparent humility and cheerfulness—'its humility, in that it seems created only for lowest service, appointed to be trodden on and fed upon; its cheerfulness, in that it seems to exult, under all kinds of violence and suffering. You roll it, and it is stronger the next day; you mow it, and it multiplies its shoots as if it were grateful; you trample upon it, and it only sends up a richer perfume; spring comes, and it rejoices with all the earth, glowing with variegated flame of flowers, waving in soft depth of fruitful strength; winter comes, and though it will not mock its fellow-plants by growing then, it will not pine and mourn, or turn colourless, or leafless as they do; it is always green, and is only the brighter and gayer for the hoar frost.' Now, with a few very trifling alterations, this beautiful description would do for your sex, and the relative position OURS have assigned you. Your gentleness, your sweetness, and your humility being precisely the attributes which *we consider fits you peculiarly for our service*; and the more you are trampled on, the more we *expect* you should, grass-like, only rise up in *grateful* and additional sweetness, which, to do you justice, for a long, long, time, and under a great many and oft-repeated trappings, is exactly what you *do*. Then again, how applicable to the moral courage of your sex, its cheerfulness under its own misfortunes and its sympathy with those of others, is the pretty simile about the grass not mocking its fellow plants by *growing* in winter, but still not pining and mourning, and turning colourless and leafless—in short, becoming useless as they do under the chilling influences of a sad change. But one thing that sometimes occurs to the poor, innocent, humble, much-enduring grass even Mr. Ruskin has forgotten to enumerate. I do not mean its gentle sheen being scathed occasionally by lightning, for so much more tempering mercy is there ever in the afflictions that come

direct from God, compared with those imposed by man, that pitying Heaven has only to weep a few showers upon its withered hopes, for a paraclete of new flowers to spring up around it. But who has not seen certain barren patches where no verdure will spring again for all the planting, all the irrigating, and all the sunshine in the world?—not only on wild desolate heaths, but through highways and byeways. And who has not been told the reason is, that some dark deed of crime was once enacted there;—and from the same fell cause it is equally possible to irrevocably destroy the humble, patient sweetness and oppression-defying elasticity of the human herb; and when such is the case, we have nothing to do but rail at it as an ungrateful, and unprofitable servant."

"I must say," said Mrs. Pemble, "that the beauty of your simile does not at all derogate from its truth. But I wish you would give me a *silhouette* of my pupils."

"No, I'll tell you nothing about them, as I wish you to find them out for yourself, except that as I think I before told you, Charley is a bit of a coward, but has a kind heart; only the worst of it is, he can't be quiet about what he does, whether it is giving a penny to a beggar or saving a pup from drowning. Like many older people, he must take out his good deeds in publicity;—but I shall leave you to turn that to account. May and Linda are decidedly pretty, and I only think it fair to tell you that any little vulgarisms you may detect in them are more acquired than natural to them, and therefore whenever you correct them you'll be sure to hear 'Miss Prosser used to say; or Miss Prosser used to do it.'"

"And who was Miss Prosser?"

"Their last teacher of modern slip-slop."

"And what was she like?"

"If you mean physically, it's not so easy to tell you, as she was very brown, and very broad, and very short, surmounted by a very white cap—so that she immediately gave one the idea of being a moving panorama of a very large molehill, with a mushroom growing on the top of it. She had kept an 'Establishment for young ladies' in a county town, of which she was, or fancied she was, one of the magnates, and was as vulgar as those three facts could make her; in short, what she would have called her '*genteel manners*' consisted in sitting upon the precipice of her chair, that is its extreme edge, carefully placing her knife and fork in parallel lines on her plate to announce that she had finished her dinner, and when she wanted bread or anything else at dinner, instead of calling for it in the assured voice that less '*genteel*' people do, she would say to whatever servant happened to be near her, in her most subdued voice, 'I'll take a *small* piece more bread, *please*;' which gave rise to a ridiculous scene once, of which the children told me. Charity and I were passing the day in Chester to go to the race-ball, and Gifford, my butler, had had leave to go out, so

that Sims, a footman I have since discharged for drunkenness, waited at their dinner, and being more or less in that happy state at the time, upon Miss Prosser with her usual moderation and humility, resting on her oars—that is, laying down her knife and fork and saying—‘I’ll take a *small* piece more cauliflower, *please*, Sims;’ he did not *hand* her the vegetable dish, but putting it over her shoulder emptied its triple contents on her plate, saying—‘Take as much as you like, old girl!’ Of course she *rode* to church, and all that sort of thing, and did not *be-grudge* the *young ladies* anything when they had said their lessons well, and was always asking one or the other of them to *help her fetch* some forgotten parcel of books or work—so that Charley gave her the *sobriquet* of ‘The *Fetch*,’ though never was ghost so like a feather bed.”

“May I ask,” said Mrs. Pemble, “whether you have told Miss Kempenfelt who I am?”

“Apropos! I’m glad you have reminded me of that. No, I have not, for without your permission I did not like to do so; and perhaps it is better not, though her ignoring the truth may subject you to more than is pleasant of her captious caprices; for I’ll do her the justice to say, that *did* she know, not even the badness of her temper, I think, would predominate over the goodness of her heart.”

“For that matter, my dear Sir Gregory, depend upon it, it would take a *great deal* to make me resent anything *your* sister could say or do to me.”

Here they stopped at Shrewsbury, and a tropical-looking gentleman got in, who, from the innumerable hands he had to shake on the platform, and the unusual heat of the weather, looked as the artist has made “that popular singer” Mr. Henry Russell look, in the portrait that “looms” above one of his songs—namely, the victim of perspiration and popularity. To a contemplative mind, even a stout gentleman on a sultry day getting into a railway-carriage, can furnish additional instances of the symmetrical equipoise with which Nature balances her own superfluities and counter-balances her own deficiencies; and this was peculiarly exemplified in the wide expanse of broad-cloth now gradually developing itself before the two travellers, for its lining, after having hung up its hat and unfurled *The Times*, nay, “the very body of the times, its form and pressure,” which nearly put out Mrs. Pemble’s left eye, while Sir Gregory was almost equally blinded by a flash from Goleopda, which darted from the facets of an enormous diamond-ring that adorned the *little* finger (if anything so large could be so called) of the very Ethiopian-looking hand of the stout gentleman, who, having already plunged deep into the leading article, his companions had an opportunity of taking an inventory of his personals; and the first thing that struck them both simultaneously was his harsh, very dark brown hair, which was not only the very best imitation of a wig which real hair had ever achieved, but was also

so dry and parched that it made one thirsty to look at it; and it seemed to have the same effect upon his *own* very swarthy face, as, with the before-alluded-to beautiful counterbalancing system of nature, *that* was sending forth innumerable little meandering rills.

"At all events," thought Mrs. Penrhyn, as she contemplated this curious juxta-position of the arid and the fertile before her,

'In the desert a fountain is springing!'

"No doubt," thought Sir Gregory, as the result of *his* conclusions on the same subject, "the truth of it is that our friend the hippopotamus there was modelled after Plutarch's dictum of the poems of Aristophanes, and that he also was not composed for the pleasure of any ordinary mortal."

An opinion in which he was confirmed by the stout gentleman, after carefully eyeing him and Mrs. Penrhyn with the scrutiny of a detective, preserving a profound and discreet silence for the rest of the way.

"You know the story of Trefungus, I suppose?" said Sir Gregory, leaning across and speaking *sotto voce* to Mrs. Penrhyn, at the expiration of a three hours' silence. "No, I do not," smiled she, "but I dare say it's very applicable."

"Trefungus," resumed Sir Gregory, "was once travelling for four days, with only *one* victim, in the mail (for it was in the days of mail coaches) during which ninety-four hours Trefungus never uttered a word, and looked so formidable that the victim dared not venture to do so either. At length, on the fourth morning, being awakened by a bright sun, and seeing they were rattling through the place of their destination, victim pulls off his nightcap, and, joyously rubbing his hands ventures in the exuberance of his delight to pointedly address his companion with the incontrovertible observation of 'A fine morning, Sir?' 'I didn't say it wasn't!' growled Trefungus; and so ended this ineffectual attempt at conversation,—and *our* journey too, for here we are, thank goodness! at Mold. P P C

CHAPTER IX.

MAY, LINDA, CHARLEY, AND CHARITY WHO BEGINS
AT HOME.

UPON arriving at the Mold station, there were there assembled the usual number of expectant friends and waiting vehicles, and among the latter, in an open carriage, the first in the line, Mrs. Pemble espied two lovely faces, which differed more in kind than in degree; for there was in the slightly elder of the two a loveliness, as it were, and loftiness of expression, which, like a

star, seemed to float apart, in a higher and purer atmosphere of its own; and yet, though the beauty of the other came nearer to that of earth, it was *not* "of the earth, earthy," but like one of those soft, luxuriant blushes which the warm kisses of the sun, stealthily conveyed through the low whisperings of the summer air, cause earth to glow with, when she answers him in flowers.

Oh, Beauty! a *fatal* gift thou mayest be, from being the most potent which Fate, in all her vast treasury has to bestow, since "that divinity which doth (but) hedge a king" straight hierarchs *thee* into omnipotence!—for what heart under the subtile influences of thy unfathomable spells but silently hymns thy praise, and subscribes to thy ritual as Spenser* wrote it!—from indeed feeling that

"—— every spirit, as it is most pure,
And hath in it the more of heavenly light,
So it the fairer bodie doth procure
To habit in, and it more fairly delight
With chearful grace and amiable sight;
For of the soule the bodie form doth take—
The soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

"Therefore wherever that thou dost behold
A comelie corpse † with beautie fair endewed,
Knows this for certaine, that the same doth hold
A beauteous soule, with fair conditions thewed,
Fit to receive the seed of virtue strewed;
For all that faire is, is by nature good—
That is a sign to know the gentle blood."

"Oh, what two lovely faces!" exclaimed Mrs. Pemble, pointing them out to Sir Gregory as soon as she had got out of the railway carriage.

"Why, those are my two monkeys," said he, hastening on towards them; but before he could reach the carriage they had alighted, and already their arms were round his neck.

"And where's Charley?" he inquired, as soon as he had kissed them both.

"Oh!" replied the youngest girl, with difficulty* suppressing a laugh, and colouring till her cheeks literally became like—

"A red, red rose that's newly sprung in June,"

as she slightly and timidly glanced at Mrs. Pemble, "we could not get him to come."

"Oh! I understand," laughed Sir Gregory; "but see! here is the formidable ogress I've brought you. Mrs. Pemble, here are only two of your fold,—this is May, and this Linda; the black sheep remained at home."

May Egerton took Mrs. Pemble's proffered hand with a natural grace and kindliness of manner which Miss Prosser's provincialism

* See his "Hymn in Honor of Beauty."

† Body.

had not been able either to *prima* or *parse* out of her, and little Linda was so far like a sheep that she immediately followed her sister's lead; and as soon as the introduction was over and they were all seated, and the horses' heads turned towards Baron's Court, which was about two miles from the station, May said—

"Grandpapa was only jesting, Mrs. Pemble, for indeed Charley is *not* a black sheep; but the maids frighten him with all sorts of foolish tales, and last night, because he would not go to bed, they told him the governess that grandpapa was to bring back was a great deal uglier than Miss Prosser, and knew very well how to manage naughty boys."

"Come, then, at *that* rate," laughed Sir Gregory, "there is every excuse for Charley; for I don't know any amount of courage, including that of Mars himself, that would voluntarily face anything uglier than Miss Prosser."

"Don't be alarmed, my dear Miss Egerton; not even Sir Gregory, whose opinions I so much respect upon all *other* subjects, shall prejudice me against your little brother, as I am obstinacy itself about my pupils, and never allow any one's judgment to interfere with my own."

"Which I am not surprised at in a person who has had *so many* pupils, and, therefore, has necessarily so large an experience," bowed he with a degree of mock solemnity that nearly made Mrs. Pemble laugh out loud; so to relieve her from her embarrassment he said, turning to his grand-daughters, "And how is Aunt Charity?"

"Oh, she's got one of her bad headaches," replied Linda, biting her pretty lips, as if to bite into an expression of suitable concern an insubordinate little smile that was playing round the corners of her mouth.

"Ah! that means," said Sir Gregory, *sotto voce* to Mrs. Pemble, "that the barometer is at stormy; *nervus* indicates wet, and we are *sure* of hysterics, but want of sleep is the most portentous of all! for *that* foretells thunder. Poor Charity! after her pains and aches, literature is her hobby; and as she fancies herself a *Mecænas* in muslin, and that this crotchet is pretty well known throughout the country, there is not a parish clerk who thinks fit to do any of the Psalms into doggerel, or an usher who, without benefit of clergy, neglects boys and birch (the alliteration *should* be inseparable) to filter or filch from Potter's exquisite translations of Sophocles, Æschylus, or Euripides, who cannot to a *certainly* calculate upon keeping off all plethoric symptoms from her exchequer; but when any of these intellectual minnows solicit the favour of a personal interview, in order to have the benefit of her censorship, we sometimes have the richest scenes imaginable; for Charity is very deaf—not, indeed, to the appeals made on the virtue whose name she bears—but organically so. And as she will not use a trumpet, at least to her ear, the *quid pro quos* which

sometimes arise in these 'literary and scientific' conversations are inconceivably ridiculous. She caught the blues in early life from an unfortunate contact with Madame de Staël and Sir Humphry Davey. I used rather to encourage her intercourse with him, thinking he might, perhaps, charitably give, or lend her a safety lamp to avoid the Corinne precipice; but no, and to this day, though now sixty-two, poor Charity is *draped* and turbaned as if she also were perched as a warning to the crows on the top of Cape Mecænas; and, I verily believe, if it were not for a wholesome fear of Bedlam and strait waistcoats, which I do all I can to encourage, we should not escape even the lyre, or the palm branch."

Though Mrs. Pemble could not help smiling at Sir Gregory's sketch of his sister, as she was too well bred to join in such a theme, in order to change the conversation, she remarked on the extreme beauty of the surrounding scenery.

"Why, yes," replied he, "it would be difficult in North Wales to discover anything that was ugly except the character of the people, who are selfish, uncouth, and ungrateful to a degree; indeed, it is to me one of the many anomalies of Nature, which, like Nature's God, are '*past finding out*,' why it is that, speaking *nationally*, the natives of mountainous countries, born and bred amid beautiful scenery, instead of being more elevated and refined in their moral attributes, and more poetical and expanded in their intellectual ones, under the influences of such external beauty and grandeur, (which if it did not quite steep, would at least, one should think, stimulate their spirits to a nobler standard of excellence,) are, on the contrary, with the few exceptions that prove the rule, *the* most money-scraping, money-hoarding, selfish, saturnine, matter-of-fact, literal, unimaginative, coarse-minded, coarse-mannered, and without going to the extremes of Alpine and Apennine cretinism—if we except their sleepless shrewdness and avidity for gain—the most intellectually-below-par people in the world."

"It does, indeed, at the first view of the matter seem strange; but I think the reason of it is," said Mrs. Pemble, "that amid all the prodigality, luxuriance, grandeur and beauty of mountainous countries, *human* existence is difficult in the extreme, and human intercourse '*few and far between*.' In the first instance, the ever-straining to supply mere physical wants, and the strict economy requisite for the hoarding and eking them out when supplied, by putting the human animal much on a par with beasts and birds of prey, must of necessity engender those two most unamiable and repulsive qualities—acquisitiveness and selfishness. With regard to the second, as

'The proper study of mankind is man,'

so is it the *only* study that can develop and improve the two appa-

rently antagonistic principles, but in reality parallel ones, of social and self-love, implanted more or less in every human being. It is this intercourse with our fellow-creatures which can alone make us find our own level, or rise above that of others. As stones, however they may differ in size or genus, all appear equally un- gainly and useless in the bed of a dried-up river; so are our very virtues and capacities rugged and unavailing till they have been, in some degree, smoothed and moulded into their proper places by the full current of human events, and the alternate ebb and flow of human opinions; for I don't believe that anything can either impart or supply the place of those hard lessons in which the world teaches such true and universal knowledge—no, not even the flights of genius itself, whose pinions for the most part are more like those of Icarus than of eagles; besides, Geniuses are by no means as common as cowslips, for truly says Virgil—

' Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto ;'

and we don't so much care for what we meet with here and there in the great gulf of Time, adown which we ourselves are hurried too rapidly to pause long over its wonders. What we want is, the genial atmosphere of every-day social intercourse, which enables us not only to breathe more freely, but also lightens the burden of life we have to bear; and the reason, I think, that we seldom find this social reciprocity among mountaineers is, as I before said, from their individuality being too much cultivated, and their never having learnt humanity in the only school it can be acquired, namely, among their fellow-creatures."

"I don't doubt but you are right," said Sir Gregory, "for everything that contracts the heart and narrows the mind must deteriorate both, and it is this which makes the society of provincial towns and all small places so offensively detestable. '*Où nous charmons, nous sommes charmés*,' says M. Adolphe Houditot, a very graceful modern French writer; and of course *vice versa*; and in all narrow circles, *sets, cliques, colonies*, and *provinces*, the '*local habitation and the name*' is the thing. Consequently, as interlopers, the four cardinal Virtues, the three Graces, and the nine Muses would have no chance against those '*oldest inhabitants*,' the seven deadly Sins."

"Oh, what a charming place!" exclaimed Mrs. Pemble, as the carriage entered the lodge-gates at Baron's Court.

"It is a nice old place; at least I like it."

"But there is nothing grandpapa is so fond of as his trees," said May.

"No, now that's not true, May," cried Linda, starting up and throwing her arms round her grandfather's neck, "for you love May, and Charley, and me better; don't you, grandpapa?"

"Well, I rather think I do, when you are good; but I plead guilty to being very proud of my timber. I have some oaks which

are thirteen hundred years old, which I'll show you to-morrow, Mrs. Pemble. It will be a pity if——”

He sighed, and did not finish the sentence; but Mrs. Pemble guessed he was thinking of that heavy mortgage which was not yet paid off, and so, as a turn in the drive through the park brought them in view of the lake on one side, and of the house at some distance off on the other, she now began to admire both, but more especially the latter, which was an Early Tudor pile of building, with its sprucely-fretted gables, gilt vanes and mullion windows all now standing boldly out, under the beautifying influence of the evening sun. As they approached the house the air was embalmed with the perfume of new-mown hay, and that piney-strawberry odour peculiar to the purple clover flowers.

“You see,” said Sir Gregory, “how late we are with our hay here, this year—indeed, later than usual, as we generally have it in by the latter end of June.”

As he was speaking, and as the carriage approached the house, a tall figure of a lady dressed in white, flung down a rake, with which she had been gracefully doing a little amateur haymaking, and walked majestically towards the house, followed, or rather preceded, by a little boy, who bounded on before her with the velocity of a mountain goat.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Sir Gregory, “there goes Charley, flying from the ogress, and Corinne has actually been making hay; disappointed in finding an *Oswald* (for which I, as *might-have-been* brother-in-law, am truly thankful) or some other *beau ideal*, I suppose, like too many other women, she took the first rake that came in her way.”

“I am sorry if I have frightened Miss Kempenfelt away,” said Mrs. Pemble.

“Oh, no! I'm sure aunt Charity is gone in to dress for dinner, for I dare say, till she saw the carriage, she had no idea how late it was,” rejoined May, at which her grandfather looked his approval, and, in alighting, patted her cheek.

“I must admire the outside of the house before I go into it,” said Mrs. Pemble, standing out on the lawn in order to do so.

“The other side is much the prettiest,” cried little Linda, holding out her hand, “if you'll come with me.”

“I shall be very happy to go with you,” assented Mrs. Pemble, taking the little hand thus offered to her; “but will not Miss Egerton be of our party too?” added she, giving her arm to May.

“The reason that Linda thinks the other side of the house the prettiest—and I'm not sure but what she is right—is, that it is perfectly embowered in foliage of one kind or another,” put in Sir Gregory.

And Mrs. Pemble could not refrain from an exclamation of delight when she beheld the magnificent *Westeria*, with its luxuri-

ant clusters of purple, grape-like flowers, which covered one side of the house, including the gables and chimney-stacks; "but," added she, "I must confess my ignorance, for I don't know the name of that beautiful creeper on the other side, with its large, heart-shaped leaves of so velvety a texture, and its curious tufts of flowers; but I dare say my little pupils will kindly enlighten me?"

"Oh! what is the name of it, May? for I never can remember it."

"And I'm like you, Linda, for I never can either," said Sir Gregory.

May, thus unanimously appealed to, said—"Aberfield calls it an *Aristollochia*."

"Aberfield is my head gardener," said Sir Gregory; "and as his father was head gardener at Hampton Court in George the Third's time, he fancies himself an oracle—though, indeed, like most Scotchmen, he is a very good gardener."

While they were still admiring the luxuriant beauty of the *Aristollochia* a dinner-gong, sounded.

"There is the half-hour bell, May, love; you had better shew Mrs. Pemble to her room," said Sir Gregory. "Stay," added he, addressing the latter, "I dare say you won't mind going in at the back of the house, and it will save you the trouble of going round."

They then entered, going down a few old steps, into a low, gothic, wainscoted hall hung with fishing and shooting tackle of every description, and, besides antlers, with several stuffed birds, including owls, herons, an albatross, and an eagle, while on the wall on either side the high mantel-piece were two enormous prints five feet long, glazed and framed in plain black oak frames, but much discoloured by time, from having no glass over them. One of these prints represented the egregious vanity of that equally egregious old hypocrite, Queen Elizabeth, dancing a *La Volta* at Lord Northampton's wedding, to refute the Duc D'Anjou's true bill of her having the evil in her ankles, which, had it been confined to them, and had not raged in her heart as it did, would have done little harm to any one but herself. And this wedding ball, he it remembered for the sake of the admirers of that great Protestant Princess and the benefit of modern Sabbatarians, took place of a Sunday! The pendant print represented the greatest enormity in the reign of her vile old pedant of a successor, James the First, in the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh. The artist had chosen the moment where that great, because good, man (with the one exception of his having whiffed tobacco into England) had ascended the scaffold, and was in the act of testing the sharpness of the axe, while his memorable words of "*This is a sharp medicine, but one which cures all complaints,*" figured on a scroll proceeding from his mouth, according to the Bartholomew-Fair taste of those times. This, however, did not prevent the grouping of the crowd below, and the universal yet varied expres-

sion of grief and consternation in their different countenances from being admirably depicted. But as they walked through this hall, Mrs. Pemble was particularly struck, on looking into a long wainscoted room, the door of which was open, at its *genuine* Elizabethan appearance, for besides the old carved high-backed arras chairs, the gold of which was nearly obliterated by time, and the leather rendered as smooth and polished as the wood, this room was strewn with fresh green rushes; and on the long oak table, which had a frame all round the bottom of it for those who sat at it to put their feet upon, stood at either end two high pewter flagons, such as are now seldom seen except in Teniers' pictures and in Bohemia, or in Wardour-street.

"Oh, what a dear old room!" said Mrs. Pemble, looking into it.

"Ah, that's the steward's room," said Sir Gregory, "and, as you perceive, I persist in pewter, as I really believe all the old farmers think the audit-ale tastes better out of it. As for the rushes, *they* are a fancy of mine, that there might be one room in the house garnished in its pristine fashion."

"Only that I rather think," said Mrs. Pemble, "that, except within the actual precincts of the Court, or in the old Baronial Halls, during one of Elizabeth's progresses, our ancestors seldom enjoyed the luxury of rushes as fresh as these."

"*Quant à cela*, as to the *freshness*, I am somewhat epicurean, as I don't care a rush for them unless they *are* fresh; so the rule is that every morning by eight o'clock this room is fresh strewn, or else Jenkins, my steward, might sing—

'The '*hardest*' time that e'er I spent
I spent among the rushes O!'

The stairs leading from this hall, although a back flight, were very wide and flat, of old dark oak, with those exceedingly thick *torsade* balustrades, with a flat bannister a foot and a half wide, which date from the beginning of Henry the Eighth's time, and the large lattice-window on the first landing was so high from the ground, that it had to be opened and shut, like a church window, with pulleys. At this landing Sir Gregory left them, and turned down the left gallery, while May and Linda conducted Mrs. Pemble down the opposite one which led to her bedroom; but, as in most houses of that date, there were windows all along one side of this gallery, looking down upon the great hall till it came to the music gallery, which was of course open, Mrs. Pemble now stopped and looked down upon the really old armour, banners, and portraits below; and what particularly attracted her attention, as she could not well make out what they were, were two massive blocks of silver on two brackets on either side of a large sea-piece, representing an engagement between an old English vessel and a Spanish galleon of the same date; so, honestly confessing her ignorance, she asked her young companions what they were.

"You recollect, no doubt," said May, "the first prize that Sir Francis Drake took was a Spanish galleon—the 'San Antonio'—which, when he boarded, he found full of gold doubloons and *silver bricks*. Well, that picture represents the action, and those two wedges of silver that you see on those brackets, are two of those identical silver bricks found in the 'San Antonio.' The way in which they came into grandpapa's possession was through an uncle of his—poor Admiral Kempenfelt, who went down in the 'Royal George,'—as *his* grandfather had married a descendant of Sir Francis Drake, who had those bricks, with many other things, as heirlooms."

"How very interesting!" said Mrs. Pemble. "I'm so glad they should have come to Sir Gregory, who has so much good taste that he deserves them. I see, now, that those brackets are in bronze, and in the shape of culverins; but I think he evinces such good taste in keeping up that rush-strewed room below!"

"I don't think," rejoined May, "that that is a mere piece of good taste of grandpapa's. I think it is more one of his inventions to do an act of kindness, without appearing to do it; for he says mere almsgiving only encourages idleness, and degrades poor people lower than those who are better off have any right to degrade them, and so he is always contriving something to be done about the place that the poor may fancy they are earning the money he gives them. I don't think in all Baron's Court anything approaching to a weed is to be found, from the numbers of old women employed in uprooting them. Then the hospital at Chester requires an incessant supply of snails and plum-tree gum. Neither will any of us ever have goitres, if eating watercresses will prevent them; and those rushes were never thought of till last year, when there was literally *nothing* left to give poor old Taffey and Tamar Lloyd to do, until grandpapa took a sudden fancy for having the steward's room strewn every morning with fresh rushes, which gives these poor old souls a shilling a-day for gathering them just at the back of their cottage; and, as their grandson, Davey, gets a shilling a dozen for all the shrew mice he can catch, they do pretty well."

"My dear Miss Egerton, you have only given me an additional proof of Sir Gregory's good taste, for good feeling is the source of all such."

And she *thought*, as she entered the large and comfortable, though tapestried bed-room appointed for her, how much more genial and vivifying was the quiet but glorious sun of this fine old English gentleman's spherical benevolence than the Brummagen pyrotechnic, but withal, most *profitable* philanthropy (?), which explodes in three-halfpenny weekly, or shilling monthly serials; or *even* than the pantheistic spiritualism, or the bearish egotism and smoky synecdoches of German MUDDLE-APHYSICS! although he *had* the misfortune to be well-born, and

was guilty of funkism, as the, alas! usual sequence of that original sin.

May, having promised to come for Mrs. Pemble to show her the way to the drawing-room, after having asked her if she should not send Grant, their maid, to her, now left her to change her own dress, for it was what Miss Kempenfelt called one of Sir Gregory's extraordinary crotchets that May, and Linda, and the governess should always dine with them; and, for *her* part, she was tired of those governesses, who were each one more ignorant, vulgar, and illiterate than the other; and it *was* hard that *she*, who had listened to Madame de Staël, conversed with Sir Humphry Davey, reparteed with Rogers, moonlighted with Moore, caballed with Campbell, and been in love with Lord Byron for four-and-twenty hours under the conscientious conviction that the passion was reciprocal, should be condemned to *such* society; and consequently it was to the atmosphere being surcharged with more governesses that Miss Charity attributed her headache on that particular day—so sympathetically did she feel for the manner in which these modern slipshodians broke poor Priscian's head. Therefore, when Mrs. Pemble made her appearance in the drawing-room and was presented to Miss Charity, that lady was dignified and distant in the extreme, but, having watched her narrowly with both her eyes and ears during dinner, she said to herself, for she was not yet arrived at that pitch of candour which could have induced her to make such a declaration *pro bono publico*, "Well, really, wherever he got her, Gregory seems to have picked up a gentlewoman at last." Moreover, Miss Charity, having been a beauty herself, appreciated and admired beauty in others, and of that Mrs. Pemble (who was but nine-and-thirty, and who did not look so old by ten years) had a considerable share. With regard to Miss Charity herself, she had elongated into a sort of human thread-paper, and the superfluity of lace falals and lappets which, after a weeping willow fashion, she always wore about her head, added to the similitude, as they gave her the appearance of the thread at the top being untidily kept, and pulled out with that degree of haste which in all things militates against neatness. All epitaphs are more or less false, and those which Time with his hard stylus graves on the "human face divine" or otherwise, as the case may be, is no exception to the general rule, as age he sometimes mellows with a comely fading, which leads to the erroneous belief that beauty must have dwelt there in youth, whereas the most radiant loveliness he as often causes totally to vanish, till,

"Like the baseless fabric of a vision,
It leaves not a wrack behind."

Now the autocrat had not dealt *quite* so harshly with Miss Charity Kempenfelt, as he had surrounded her pale, shadowy features with a sort of aqueous, moon-beamy halo, which allowed wandering

imagination to still find beauty among their ruins. Winter and summer her evening costume was white muslin (and no crinoline), from which she never deviated. Time, indeed, *had* thinned her flowing hair, but as it was still unsilvered by his touch, the dark, lank, disconsolate braids that descended irregularly about her cheeks only added by their invidious contrast to the pallor of the latter, and to that of her lack-lustre (once dark blue) eyes. Upon the whole, considering how far she had advanced in the virgin-thorn blight, she was by no means venomous, having—such as they were—resources within herself; for, as she was wont to say, the autumn of her days was divided between Hygea and Helicon, or, as her brother less sentimentally expressed it, between poetry and pills.

After dinner, as soon as the dessert appeared, and just as Miss Charity had condescended to address a bucolic remark to Mrs. Pemble about the hay, a somewhat fierce struggle appeared to be going on at the dining-room door, and the following fragments of an altercation were heard:—

“Come now, Master Charles; don’t be so silly; you shan’t have no dessert if you don’t go in directly.”

“No, no, I *want*! Tell Gifford to ask Linda to bring me up two apricots and a good *big* bit of cake.”

“I tell you what, Sir,” said Sir Gregory, rising and going to the door, and *vi et armis* dragging in the kicking, struggling, anti *Carlo dolce*, “you’ll either come in or go to bed directly.”

At which fiat Master Charley hung his head, and nearly pulled one of the little gold Spanish buttons off his very pretty dark blue velvet blouse, but made no further resistance, and at length quietly anchored beside his grandpapa’s chair. He was very like his younger sister, though not quite so pretty; still with the same dazzling skin and complexion, dark blue eyes, with long lashes, peach-like cheeks, and thick golden hair, with what his sisters called “such an innocent wave in it.” Having eaten some strawberry ice, which apparently had imparted a little cool courage to him, he ventured to raise his eyes and look furtively round the table, and then *vid* that interdicted channel, a whisper, he said to Sir Gregory—

“Grandpapa, where is the new governess?”

“There she is,” replied he, out loud, to the querist’s great consternation—“that lady in black, with a large rose in the bosom of her dress. Go over and speak to her.”

“Come!” said Mrs. Pemble, seconding the invitation, “for I’m very anxious to see that little Charley, who, I hear, believes in ogresses. He must be such a funny little fellow to have such ridiculous ideas!”

Charley, modestly triumphant at being among so large a majority as those who have ridiculous ideas, without further demur walked over to her, and first staring at her from head to

foot, as if he had been taking an inventory of her for a police report, and seemingly much re-assured by his investigation, though he still cautiously kept his hands behind his back, at length said, in a voice perfectly audible and assured—

"But are *you really* the governess though?"

"I am, *indeed*; and now, notwithstanding that terrible confession, will *you* give me a kiss?"

"Oh, yes; as many as you like, for you look very nice to kiss; but, on account of Miss Prosser, I made it a rule I never *would* kiss governesses."

"Ha! Ha! ha!—a '*rule*' you can't do better than keep to, as you get on in the world, Master Charley," laughed Sir Gregory.

But Charley, putting the laugh on the wrong fact, thought they were laughing at his having kissed Mrs. Pemble; and as children invariably fancy that when any of their sayings or doings create a laugh, that their wit is admired, he now *encored* himself by throwing his arms round her neck, and giving her half-a-dozen sonorous salutes.

"Hey day, Mr. Charley! it seems there is no rule, even when made by such matured wisdom as yours, without an exception; and I'm only afraid you'll go from one extreme to the other, and devour the ogress instead of her devouring you," said Sir Gregory.

"She's *not* an ogress," vehemently protested Charley.

"I never said she was, but I know who did. Neither do I consider myself a HUNKS."

"Are you fond of dogs?" inquired Charley, laying both his hands on Mrs. Pemble's shoulders as he sat on her lap, and in his loudest voice, so as to drown his grandpapa's want of *tact* in alluding to so extremely disagreeable a subject.

"*Very* fond of them," replied she.

"Oh, I'm so glad! then you shall see Swiftpaws. And of cats too?"

"Well, I can't say that I like *all* cats as I do all dogs. But I *have* some very intimate cat friends; indeed, I've just left one whom I was very sorry to leave;" and she sighed as she thought of poor Tim, Sarah Nash, and Mr. Phippen, and could almost fancy she heard Tim's melancholy mew along the dreary, wainscoted hall in the gloomy house in Church-street, and that she could see poor Sarah's red eyes, as she sat by her consumptive kitchen fire, and that she heard good old Mr. Phippen's creaking boots (once her only music) still over head, and reproached herself with ingratitude for being surrounded with such bright beautiful young faces, and amid such a paradise of fruit and flowers, while they were still in that Slough of Despond. But, unheeding the sigh, and only noticing the words, Charley slipped down from off her lap and said—

"Grandpapa,"—but suddenly stopping, he turned to Miss Kempenfelt, as the fountain-head of all domiciliary authority, and

added, "I mean Aunt Charity,—may I bring Fluff and Swiftpaws down to shew them to Miss—?"

"Ogress," maliciously put in Sir Gregory.

"She is not at all *a-miss*, as *you* seem to think, Charley," said Miss Kempenfelt, in a complimentary and condescending tone, delighted to display her wit, even at the expense of being amiable to a governess; but, not "catching the idea," Charley returned to the charge with another.

"May I, though, Aunt Charity?"

"Yes, my dear, if Mrs. Pemble likes it."

And away scampered Charley for his two idols.

"What a dear little fellow he is!" said Mrs. Pemble, as soon as the door had closed upon him.

"So he is," said May; "and he is so affectionate and kind-hearted that it is impossible not to love him."

"Though," added Linda, "grandpapa says he's so naughty, and Aunt Charity that he is so troublesome; but all I know is, that I never *begrudge* any trouble I take for Charley."

"I don't wonder at your looking horrified, my dear Mrs. Pemble, at a *young lady's* making use of such a pothouse expression."

"Why, what did I say?" asked little Linda, colouring to her very temples.

"Only that you did not *begrudge* taking any trouble for your brother."

"Well, Miss Prosser always said *begrudge*, and I read it in a great many books and newspapers."

"I've no doubt you do; and if you were to converse with the writers of those books and papers you would hear a great many more equal vulgarisms; but their using them don't make them patent, for all that."

"Don't you think," said Miss Charity, addressing herself to Mrs. Pemble, "that those clever, but intensely vulgar writers of the present day have done an immensity of harm in defacing the English language?"

"I'm quite sure they have, as the grand struggle of their lives is to *level upwards*. Now, I would not so much mind their eternal crusades, or rather *plushades*, against flunkeys, their tirades against titles, and their bulls against birth, if they would not bring their own maid-of-all-work antecedents to bear upon the language, and tattoo it with all their horrible '*begrudges*,' '*rides*,' '*genteels*,' '*partys*,' '*goods*,' '*pleases*,' '*treats*,' and '*such likes*.' Bishop Louth, nearly a hundred years ago, remarked that the energy, variety, richness, and elegance of the English language had been abundantly proved by numberless trials, in verse and prose, upon all subjects, and in every kind of style; but, in the same sentence, he also observes that whatever other improvements it might have received, it had made no advances for the last two

hundred years in grammatical accuracy. What *would he* have thought of its retrogradings had he lived till now? I myself think it is a thousand pities that there should not be an English Academy, like the French one, where our native language might be learnt classically—a sort of verbal mint, in fact, from which no word should be issued till stamped with its special, legitimate, exact, and current value.”

“I quite agree with you,” said Miss Charity; “but I don’t think the present race of literary and political pigmies are likely to establish such an institution, as they seem, for the most part, all and each, to be the feverish omnipresence of themselves, and not to have an idea or purport beyond *self*; so that all conversation, properly so called, is at an end, as it is invariably *I* and my book, or *I* and my speech, or *I* and my system; but, in whatever department, it is a rabid rushing after *notoriety*, a solemn pomposity about trifles, and an egotism, that would be ridiculous if it were not revolting.”

“So it is, indeed; but don’t you remember what Mrs. Montagu said, so truly, when speaking of her visit to Burke at Beaconsfield, where, after drawing such a glowing picture of that bright gem in his casket of private life, as the kind and indulgent master, the benevolent, zealous, and charitable neighbour, the well-bred, affectionate, and attentive husband, and saying that the demons of ambition and party who hover about Westminster had not extended their baneful influence to his villa, she adds—‘A little mind is ever in a state of *tracasserie*, because it is moved by little things. I have always found that nothing is so gentle as the chief out of war, nor so serene as the statesman out of place; if it were fit to name names and certify places, I could bring many examples to justify my opinion. I so much delight in these working master-spirits in their holiday humour, that I had rather play at teetotum, or cross and pile, with Julius Cæsar than with Sardanapalus; for the first would have the ease and carelessness which belongs to play, the other all the seriousness and anxiety which belongs to business.’ And as the present age can boast more retail and Brummagem Sardanapaluses than Cæsars, the solemn nothings with which we are inundated are easily explained; for pomposity is the first homage that mediocrity pays to self.”

“True!” cried Sir Gregory.

But it was evident that Miss Charity, though she had bent her ear very attentively the whole time Mrs. Pemble was speaking, had only caught a word here and there, for all she said in reply was—

“Ah, yes, Burke! There *were* giants in *those* days. I never saw Burke; but my father had the enviable privilege of being one of his intimates.”

Here Gifford entered, and stooping down said in a low voice to his master, “Mr. Lethbridge has called, Sir Gregory, only to see

you, as he says he fears it will be too late to give Miss Egerton her Hebrew lesson this evening."

"By all means beg of him to walk in." He is," continued Sir Gregory, addressing Mrs. Pemble as soon as Gifford had left the room, "a young curate doing duty at Lyllisfern, a village three miles from this. I wish to goodness he was *our* curate at Baron's Court, or even at Mold, for he is an excellent young man and one of the cleverest fellows I know anywhere, and, they tell me, a first-rate Hebrew scholar; in which language he is good enough to give May lessons, and occasionally to play a game of chess with me."

Mr. Lethbridge now entered, and Mrs. Pemble could not help thinking, as she looked at this exceedingly gentleman-like, intellectual-looking, and handsome young man, that, unless he wished to have him for a relation, it was not very wise of Sir Gregory to give a beautiful girl of fifteen, like May, such a tutor; for Horace Lethbridge was not more than eight-and-twenty, with a profusion of the most luxuriant dark, soft, wavy (not curly) chestnut hair, a high white forehead, low straight brows, and very long cut dark blue eyes with thickly fringed lashes. The nose and mouth were so faultlessly and delicately chiselled that but for his very virile whiskers, they might have given to his face an air of effeminacy, more especially as in that face, except the lips, which were very red, there was not a vestige of colour, and its expression in repose was pensive, not to say melancholy, in the extreme; but when he smiled his whole face lighted up like a landscape steeped in a sudden flood of sunshine, and it would have been impossible to have seen anywhere more beautiful or more beautifully-set teeth; and, most rare perfection of all, there was none of that omnipresence of *self* about him of which Miss Kempenfelt had been complaining. He shook hands cordially with Sir Gregory, and quietly with Miss Charity and the two girls; and upon Sir Gregory's naming him to Mrs. Pemble, he bowed to her without any of the awkwardness of a bookworm, and then seating himself took the glass of claret Sir Gregory had poured out for him. Mrs. Pemble narrowly watched May at his entrance, but she could perceive no change pass over the calm heaven of her face; not so Miss Charity, she fluttered and *minauded* a little, or rather so much, that it was easy to see that it only rested with the Rev. Horace Lethbridge to have become a second, and a very irreverent, Lord Byron, had he so pleased.

"Is Charley gone to bed?" asked Mr. Lethbridge, looking round and missing his little merry face.

"No," said May "he's only gone for Fluff and Swiftpaws to shew them to Mrs. Pemble," and as she spoke little fingers were heard drumming on the door, and through the key-hole came these words—

"Linda, here's me! where's oo?"

"Oh," laughed Linda, stopping to explain to Mrs. Pemble, on her way to the door, "when Charley was only four years old he

went all through the house looking for me, and crying out 'Linda, here's me! where's oo?' And as we all laughed so much at this, he now never says anything else when he wants a door opened or to call me."

"It would be a pity that he should," said Mrs. Pemble, "for I'm always so sorry when children leave off speaking in their own innocent way; as that me, and oo, and zoo are indispensable for petting."

"Linda now opened the door, and Charley entered, leading in, in triumph!—by a blue sash, once the property of Miss Charity herself, a very beautiful red and white setter, upon whose back rode with a sybarite air of perfectly oriental apathy, a very large and spotlessly white Persian cat. This was the celebrated Mr. Fluff, celebrated for his diplomatic astuteness in simulating death, to lure incautious mice to their destruction, and for his piscatory and epicurean habits in abstracting, with his own snowy paw, gold-fish out of glass-globes, whenever they came in his way, or he in theirs; but surely every grimalkin has a right to make a cat's-paw of *himself* if he pleases.

"Ho, ho! enter an episode of the happy family," said Sir Gregory.

"Here is Swiftpaws; isn't he a nice dog? Kiss his head and feel his ears; they are much softer than velvet; and see, what beautiful big black eyes he has. And here is Fluff; he won't scratch you," cried Charley, unceremoniously lifting that magnificent animal off of the dog's back, and flinging him, or, as Linda called it, *flumping* him into Mrs. Pemble's lap. And no sooner was poor Swiftpaws released from his compulsory servitude than he ran, bounding and barking and wagging his tail, up to Sir Gregory to welcome him home.

"He is, indeed, a beautiful dog," said Mrs. Pemble, "and I suppose," added she, with a smile, "you call him Swiftpaws because he's so fat."

"No, I don't; it's because he ran so fast when he was a pup; and so he does now when he's out. But what do you think of Fluff?"

"Well, I think he really must be the very identical White Cat that the fairy-tale is called after, he's so very magnificent."

"Oh, no! because *that* cat, you know, was a princess, and had to have its head and tail cut off; and nobody shall ever cut off Fluff's head. I'd kill them if they did."

"But that would be very wicked of you; and, besides, it would not bring poor Fluff back to life."

"Well, if I mightn't kill them, I'd beat and bite them, and stick pins in them."

"Horrible! I'm afraid he'll turn out a great moralist (in the way of authorship) after all, he seems to have such precociously well-defined ideas of avoiding the capital punishment attached to *tangible*

crimes, and taking them out in the small change of petty torture," said Sir Gregory, as he continued to twist Swiftpaw's velvet ears round his fingers, while the dog's head rested on his knee, looking up, with its two great worlds of eyes full of love into his face, and following with intense interest every word he uttered.

"Pray, master Charley, is this the way you treat your old friends?" said Mr. Lethbridge, bending forward and looking down the table at the place where he was standing, now doing the honors of Fluff's head and paws.

"Oh!" cried Charley, breaking suddenly away, and with one bound jumping into Mr. Lethbridge's arms; "when did you come, and have you brought me any paper boats?"

"I'm sorry to say I have not, for I have been very busy all day."

"Well, but make me some."

"I can't, for I have nothing here to make them with."

"Oh, but make something to make them with."

"One would really think, Miss Egerton," said Mr. Lethbridge, holding both Charley's militant hands within one of his, "that he was paraphrasing our last lesson."

"What was that?" asked Sir Gregory.

"On the Mosaic cosmogony, or rather a vindication of it, tending to prove the goodness of God from the lateness of the creation of our system, assuming that he had created no worlds or spirits before, and to shew that the term *barah* means to bring something into existence out of nothing, and not merely to form out of pre-existing materials. The *αμορφος υλης*, or materials out of which the world was formed, were first created by God; and, my little Charley, it is only God who *can* make things out of nothing."

"Only God?" repeated the child in a low voice, as he looked with earnest and inquiring eyes into the young curate's kind and intelligent face, and then became perfectly silent; for to his young heart the mere name of "God" had all the solemnity of a prayer, and he had been early taught that when he joined his little hands in prayer, he was to commune with his own heart and be *still*.

"Good child!" said his grandfather, shaking one of his little feet, as it touched his knee under the table.

"Any news, Mr. Lethbridge?" asked Miss Kempenfelt, who despaired of benefiting by the general conversation; and moreover, as she always said that he had the handsomest eyes in the world, he must of necessity fix them on her when she specially addressed him.

"By the bye!—how very remiss of me not to mention it before!—a gentleman, or, perhaps I ought to say, a genius—"

"Right! as they are by no means synonymous," put in Sir Gregory.

"Has arrived at Lyllisfern," continued Mr. Lethbridge; "and was inquiring about you, Miss Kempenfelt, yesterday evening, after a lecture he gave in the National School-room."

This Sir Gregory passed on and repeated to his sister, as he did in all that followed, having the art, like those accustomed to speak to one particular deaf person, of making her hear.

"Inquiring for me?" re-echoed Miss Charity; "what is he? Do I know him? Does he know me?"

"Only by reputation, as being High Almoner, as it were to the ladies of Parnassus," smiled Mr. Lethbridge, who always furbished up his tropes when he conversed with Miss Charity.

"But who and what is he? and what is he doing at Lyllisfern?"

"Who he is I don't exactly know, only that he is called, or calls himself, Mr. Newton Twitcher. What he is I know still less, except that, as I understand, he has a rich father and mother and an exceedingly comfortable home, in which he never remains four-and-twenty hours, but travels about the country, as he says, for quiet and leisure to study. I should say he was a gentleman creating difficulties under which to struggle."

"And what has he written?"

"Ah! *that* is a secret as profound as his work, which he says is a philosophical one."

"Tush!" said Miss Charity, who, like all sensible people, seemed to have no great faith in philosophy; "and pray what was his lecture about?"

"That is a question more easily asked than answered; but as far as I could make it out, it appeared to me upon cheese and church-rates."

"Cheese and church-rates! What a strange jumble!"

"Well, exactly; but don't you know every one thinks it necessary to lecture now, not from any conviction upon any particular subject, but wholly and solely to thrust themselves into a little publicity, if it is only *via* a paragraph in a provincial paper; and the great thing is to have the subject of the lecture well christened with a taking name according to the prevailing watch-word of the day or of the locale they happen to be in, so as to draw the *crowd*—for *that's* the main point; and as Mr. Newton Twitcher's audience was composed entirely, or nearly so, of farmers and Dissenters, he with great judgment selected cheese for the farmers and church-rates for the Dissenters."

"Absurd!" said Miss Kempenfelt, "I fully expect some day when I order the carriage to be told that I can't have it, for that Price is gone to give a lecture, only that he would not know what to lecture about."

"Oh! upon Titus Oates to be sure (one of Sir Gregory's horses was called Titus), and then with the aid of *Tongue* he might bruise his oats as much as he pleased."

"Aye!" said Sir Gregory, "and, in our present *enlightened times*, as it pleases us to call them, he'd only have to be as finished a scoundrel, first Anabaptist, then Jesuit, Protestant, plotter, perjurer, liar, traitor, and informer, and I'm quite sure he'd fare as

well now as Oates did *then*; and, like him, carry off a twelve hundred a-year pension, and any other little profits or *honors* going."

Here Gifford came to tell Miss Kempenfelt that coffee was ready. Upon her rising to leave the room, the noise of the backing chairs set Swiftpaws barking, and as he was jumping and *cabrioleing* round her, in a manner perilous to the diaphanous texture of her drapery, she stooped forward to beat him down with her handkerchief; but, like shortsighted mortals as we are, in avoiding a trifling evil she literally ran her head into a serious one, for off came one of her lappets, and with it a lock, such as, had it been attached to a head instead of to a lappet, a thousand Sir Plumes might have been found sufficiently adventurous to have severed; as it was, both gentlemen saw the catastrophe, and both rose simultaneously to pick up the truant lace; but, though Sir Gregory was far too really well bred to let his sister be publicly annoyed, and was, therefore, the first to seize on the prize, in picking it up dexterously to conceal the stray ringlet, he could not resist his jest for all that, and so in presenting it to her, knowing very well that she could not hear a syllable of his harangue, he said with the most ludicrous gravity—"Here, my dear Charity; for as Blackstone says, '*so great is the regard of the law for private property that it will not authorize the least violation of it; no, not even for the general good of the whole community.*'"

He and Mr. Lethbridge did not remain long in the dining-room; and, to crown that, to Mary Penrhyn, nearly quite happy day, Sir Gregory, as was his wont, read prayers, and on this night Mr. Lethbridge helped him in the midst of his assembled household to do so; it was *praying* and not mere reading, and still less like the, alas! usually monotonous mouthings of family prayers! for the deep harmonious tones of heart-felt piety of both the old man who *had* known God's mercies in the past, and of the young one who trusted to them for the future, as far—

"——— outrang earth's drowsy chime,
As Heaven outshines the taper's light!"

CHAPTER X.

AT HOME AND ABROAD; OR, PEACE AND WAR.

FOUR months had glided away since Mrs. Penrhyn's instalment at Baron's Court; the news of the victory of the Alma had arrived in England; Harcourt had not only escaped unscathed, but had been honorably mentioned in poor Lord Raglan's despatches—for he it was, when the Commander-in-Chief, looking at the difficulties

of the position, had asked if it would be possible to get a couple of guns to bear on the masses, had answered with an emphatic "yes," and, dashing through a heavy fire, had conveyed the query to two Artillery officers, who replied to it by bringing up those two memorable guns, which fired with so much effect upon the Russian squares; for though the first shot missed, "the next, and the next," as Mr. Russell describes in his admirable letters, "cut through the ranks so cleanly and so keenly that a clear lane could be seen for a moment through the square." Besides Sir Gregory, May and Linda were the only persons of the family cognizant of Mrs. Penrhyn's real name and position; and when that gloomy October morning was made glad by the tidings of this hard-won battle, and the same post brought a few hurried lines from Harcourt, scrawled upon one of the very cannons he had caused to be brought up, and which had done such good service, May it was who was the first to bring to her room, early in the morning, the letter and the news, but all she said was—

"He's safe! I mean your son, and grandpapa says he has distinguished himself." The mother of course tore open the letter first; it was but a few lines; which ran as follows:—

"On the Top of a Cannon.

"MY OWN DEAR MOTHER!

"Hurrah! we've scattered the enemy like chaff before the wind! The French, (the finest fellows in the world—I don't mean only in the field,) after we had routed the Russians in all directions, turned the guns on the hill against their flying masses, which the cavalry in vain tried to cover. A few faint struggles from the scattered infantry, and a few rounds of cannon and musketry, and the enemy fled to the south-east, leaving three generals, three guns, about six or seven hundred prisoners, and, at a rough guess, about three or four thousand wounded behind them; but if I had time and paper I would not fill either with these details, which you will find all so much better and more correctly given in *The Times*, whose correspondent, Mr. Russell, is the prince of good fellows: we call him our *Alma Pater* for he fights our battles so nobly at home, while we are fighting theirs abroad. All the fellows are congratulating me, for an aid-de-camp has just told Wilmot of Our's, that Lord Raglan has made honorable mention of *your son* in this day's despatch. But if so, don't be prematurely vain, mother, for remember that such mention is but an appeal from my country, to which I have yet to respond in a manner worthy of it; for in the face of an enemy every Englishman is but a fragment of England, and by the samples the whole fabric will be judged. I am so thirsty, that I think I could drain the Alma at a draught to your health. God bless and watch over you, my own dearest Mother!—for I am almost as sleepy as I am thirsty; so hey for the old invocation—

'Somne hevis quanquam certissima mortis imago
 Consortem cupio testa men esse tori
 ALMA quies! optata veni; nam sic sine vita
 Vivere quam suavi est, sic sine morte mori;'

which will shew you that I am a good boy, and in the midst of all this jolly work don't forget my 'book.' And now, good night! and once more God bless you, my own dear Mother! Remember that the God of Battles is also the God of Mothers; so pray, that I may ever prove myself worthy of being

"Your grateful and affectionate Son,

"HARCOURT PENRHYN.

"Heights of the Alma, Midnight, Sept. 21, 1854."

The letter dropped from her hand, and in a paroxysm of tears she fell upon her knees to thank God for having spared her only child.

May stood pale as a statue beside her while she prayed, and when she arose picked up the letter and gave it to her.

"You may read it, love," said Mrs. Penrhyn, "and you will see how much I have to be grateful for."

When May had read the young soldier's letter she threw her arms round his mother's neck and wept too, but said not a word.

"Poor child," thought the latter, "if she can so sympathize with the feelings of others, how keen must be her own! Decidedly I must again caution Sir Gregory against Mr. Lethbridge, for I don't see how it is possible he should avoid falling in love with her, and, on the other hand, she incurs quite as much danger from him."

That morning Mrs. Pemble excused herself from going down to breakfast, that she might write to Harcourt by the first post, but told May she would join them in the school-room immediately after. In an incredibly short time she had written him a volume, for when the pen is spurred on by the heart, it always "gallops apace;" but while, with a mother's pride, she exulted in the high-hearted daring of her boy, with a mother's fear she dreaded the rash courage of eighteen, and so she ended her letter with a quotation from a favourite French author of Harcourt's: "*Rappel toi surtout que, ce n'est pas assez que vous soyez brave dans les occasions, il faut de plus que vous ayez de la conduite une bonne tête, rend plus de service à l'état, que cent bras bien armés; et un capitaine expérimenté, que mille soldats intrepides.*"

This letter sealed and despatched, she descended to the school-room, but before we enter it with her it may be as well briefly to chronicle the *coup d'état* she had struck at Miss Prosser's course of stultification and the educational *régime* she had established. To begin at the beginning: beyond mending, and keeping their things in order, Grant's personal attendance was entirely withdrawn from May and Linda, who at first thought this extremely hard,

more especially as to stay-lacing, boot-lacing, and "*doing their hair*," which were for a long time so many toilet problems which they almost despaired of solving, but which they at length conquered; neither did they at all like, when they returned home, tired from a long walk, having to add to their fatigue by folding up and putting away their own things, which heretofore Grant had always been in the habit of doing for them; but Mrs. Pemble had suffered so severely in her own reverses from being deprived of personal attendance, that she saw the imperious necessity of early making everyone as independent of it as possible, as it is always easy, at a moment's notice, to fall into idle and luxurious habits, but extremely difficult, even in the course of months or years, to struggle out of them. Next, warm water was entirely banished, and, as a finale to all other ablutions, a cold douche substituted night and morning, which, with the plentiful friction of a sort of canvas moss Turkish towels, are not only infallible preservatives against cold, but the finest cosmetics in the whole world. Prayers and breakfast over, their first lesson was in the housekeeper's room, to learn how to *order* all the dinners through the house, and, as the first rudiments of that indispensable art, how to *choose* meat, fish, poultry, vegetables, fruit, game, butter, &c., which may indeed be called the grammar of the culinary art, as without it all the rest is faulty and uncertain. Next, three times a week, they made the pastry, jellies, meringues, chippolata puddings, *Charlottes Russe*, creams, custards, blanc-manges, &c., also occasionally *salmis suprémes* and *coquilles de volaille*; and into the whole chymistry of soups, vegetable and others, they were thoroughly initiated,—as also into the simple, but for all that rarely-achieved, perfections of good, un-floured, melted butter, smooth and creamy bread-sauce, and what Miss Charity used not inaptly to designate "*right-minded*" coffee—that is, clear and strong, with an aroma that warranted it *genuine*, and not merely concocted for appearance. But, as Mrs. Pemble never failed to impress upon them that they might not always be able to command such an aristocratic *cuisine* as that of Baron's Court, it was quite as important that they should master the equal, though different, merits of plain roasting and boiling, and, above all, that higher and more rarely decently achieved branch of plain cooking—*broiling* and *frying*; for if a plain mutton chop and beef steak be not blackened by the calumny of bad dressing, and hardened by the ignorant treatment they receive, they are by no means to be despised; and though a *filet* of sole is unquestionably a better thing than *certainly* an *ill-fried* one, yet one that is well fried may find many amateurs. And this branch of the art they had ample opportunities of acquiring in ordering the servants' and Charley's dinner; and as in war, so in culinary affairs, the first thing is to collect the *matériel*, therefore the larder was always reviewed before a single dinner was ordered—for it was one of Mrs. Pemble's rules, in which all good housekeepers will

agree, that, with the exception of cold, roast, and boiled beef, there is nothing so wasteful as uncomfortable cold-meat dinners, and as long as there are vegetables and bread in the world they need never be; and bones, which by bad managers are thrown away, with good ones play a prominent part in making good vegetable soups; and if a person had nothing but eggs to live upon, as there are fifty different ways of dressing them, it would be as well to, in some little degree, vary their compulsory diet by being acquainted with these fifty ways, instead, as is the case with so many ladies, not even knowing how to boil one properly; and, as every one of any refinement eats, more or less, from their eye, another great secret in domestic economy is knowing how to send up things nicely—for dishing is to food what dressing is to human benigs, where taste is evinced in either case it enhances merit and conceals defects. *Bref*, as Mrs. Pemble used to impress upon her pupils, there is nothing so truly vulgar as a bad *cuisine* and an ill-managed or ill-appointed house; and among a certain class of “British Females,” though without the *circonstance attenuante* of their having acquired any more intellectual species of knowledge, one never sees anything else, from the very refined, but, nevertheless, lamentable fact of their not knowing goat from goose, or crow from capon, and confidently relying upon their having *ordered* the latter and being made to *pay for it*. The dairy, the laundry, the bakehouse, and the poultry-yard, also contributed their several quotas of necessary knowledge to the two sisters; and, besides clothes for the poor, they always made and kept a great store of lint, as, whenever there were unfortunately any accidents in the village, it was Mrs. Pemble’s wish that they should not only see but learn how to dress wounds; and for the more regular routine of a sick room (to which every woman ought to be habituated, and how few are!) they had ample and good, sharp practice in the *exigeante*, ultra-peculiarities of their Aunt Charity’s hypochondriacal whims. With the National School Mrs. Pemble of course could not interfere, so it was left to the edifying information of those little books which inform young paupers that “*a cat has four legs*,” lest they should be too intellectually vain of making that discovery all by themselves, while *crochet*, catechism and coughing completed the rest of the foliage on their tree of knowledge. But Sir Gregory had a Parochial school of his own, and from this Mrs. Pemble totally banished *crochet*, which was replaced by plain work in all its branches, including mending; their *coup d’essai* being upon their own and their parents’ clothes, and when they could work well enough they were allowed to take in work and keep the money they earned by it. To this school she had got Sir Gregory to attach a large kitchen and laundry, in which they received every possible instruction in each department, being made to wash and get up their own and their parents’ clothes, and to dress their own and their parents’ dinners; and if that dinner were only potatoes or oaten-meal, they

soon learnt that as long as there was salt or an onion to be had, they might be made palatable and nutritive, instead of insipid and the reverse. The scrubbing and cleaning, which is also an *art* as well as any other to do it properly, was likewise done by the children alternately; and three times a week, for two hours of an evening, Mr. Lethbridge expounded, in the *true* sense of the word, the Scriptures to them; for the Rev. Jabez Jowl, the incumbent of Baron's Court, to which he had been inducted by Sir Gregory's agent while he was in India, was exceedingly Low-church, and thought everything that could smooth or make cheerful the up-hill road of life to rich or poor was a deadly sin, always excepting the good things of the church, which his colossal hands seemed formed for the express purpose of grasping. His whole cry (or, more properly speaking, roar—for in the pulpit, especially when he preached in Welsh, his voice was a perfect bellow) was "Faith! Faith! Faith!" seemingly forgetting, as all those exclusive Faith-ites do, the grand Bible principle, that *though we shall be justified by faith, we shall be judged by works*; and indeed if people had not a *nominal* faith, they would not be found inside a church. But to impress upon them that their hourly and daily conduct must be the evidence of that faith, in short—the inculcating of our blessed LORD's promise, "*Insomuch as ye do it unto one of these, ye do it unto Me,*" never entered his head. To come to church and to communicate, no matter how sin-laden or how sin-seeking, these were his only doctrines; consequently he did not approve of Sir Gregory's enlightening and amusing the people, and so stuck steadily to the National School, and the orthodox episcopal little books, containing so correct and indisputable an inventory (always excepting in cases of *lusus naturæ*) of the cat's legs. Mrs. and Miss Jowl were peculiar in their appearance, being what the natives called "very Welshy." When they walked, their heads and shoulders, and, in short, every other portion of their bodies, appeared to go much faster than their feet. Mrs. Jowl was very pale and evaporated-looking, like a dissipated ghost; but Miss Jowl, who was not higher than a peony, was also as red, with a profusion of really beautiful chestnut hair, which she wore in a forest of ringlets. All the neighbourhood complained of the extensive ignorance upon all subjects of both Mrs. and Miss Jowl; but this was unreasonable, as they forgot that both were so primed and loaded with texts that there could not possibly be room for another thing, though it had been no bigger than a midge's egg or a grain of sand. But these texts exploded on all occasions, for it was with them they consoled affliction, relieved distress, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, healed wounds, and set limbs; in short, the *word* was everything, except in the innumerable village alehouses, where the *spirit*, more especially among the Rev. Jabez Jowl's most constant communicants, reigned supreme. In addition to his wife and daughter, the reverend gentleman had three or four

sons, who were fine-looking young men, or would have been so, but that their very youth and health appeared compressed and distorted into a sort of unnatural solemnity, as if to smile were sin—to laugh, perdition. Therefore, as there was no assistance to be derived from the Rector of Baron's Court or his family, the task of bestowing general information upon the children of Sir Gregory's school devolved entirely upon his granddaughters and their governess; but it must be confessed, to the credit of these poor children, that if they were not taught upon scientific principles that a cat had four legs, neither did any of them ever deserve to learn that it also sometimes had nine tails!

In the midst of all these reforms, as may be supposed, Charley was not overlooked: his fear of ghosts Mrs. Pemble had quite conquered by telling him divers amusing ghost stories, and she had also utilized his talent for mischief by having him taught to hem handkerchiefs, knit stockings, and sew on buttons, but *not* as a punishment and a thing to be laughed at, but as an especial privilege, of which he was deprived whenever he boasted of his charities or other good deeds. For his superfluous energy she had also found a safety-valve by getting Sir Gregory to let him have a little carpenter's shop fitted up, and the learning to make his own toys greatly enhanced his delight in playing with them, and his largesses to his sisters and the maids, in the way of winders, and window wedges, were untold. Mrs. Pemble never allowed them to interrupt their lessons by asking questions at the time; but, in order both to exercise their memories and impress the subject more thoroughly on them, whatever they did not quite understand, or wished to know, whether in scripture, history, geography, botany, languages, natural history, or anything else, was to form the subject of their evening's conversation.

What surprised Miss Charity most in the rapid progress of her nieces was, that though, from the course of domestic economy of which Mrs. Pemble was making them thoroughly mistress, they were oftener below stairs and brought into greater contact with the servants than ever they had been during the reign of the elegant—or, as herself would have phrased it, the "*genteel*"—Miss Prosser, yet not only their manners, but their language, was so much improved; but, as Mrs. Pemble told her, she pointed out to them that kitchen phraseology did *not* sound well in the mouths of young ladies, yet if they were actually bent upon cultivating it they could always do so by undergoing a course of modern popular English and American *ILLITERATURE*, where, without "*a deal*" of trouble, they would find "*a many*" "*genteel*," "*rides*," "*be-grudges*," and "*I'm not going to's*," "*don't intend to's*," "*I'll fix you up's*," and "*such like*!"

But what more especially horrified the lip-worshipping Mr. Jowl was, that Mr. Lethbridge (whom he opined had no business in his parish) had established at Baron's Court, in a field of Sir Gregory's,

a Sunday evening Cricket Club for the working men, to which none were admitted but those who had attended church twice; and though these men were proverbially the most sober and the best conducted in the parish, the reverend gentleman never failed to impress upon them, even from the pulpit, that they were "bowling themselves headlong (query, footlong?) to the devil!" while against "the *publicans* and sinners" not one word—for *they* were VERY SUCCESSFUL!

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCHOOL-ROOM.

"MRS. PEMBLE," said May, one gloomy November day about three o'clock, when the rain was beating in torrents against the latticed window, and she, Linda, and Charley were all seated comfortably at work round the school-room fire, Charley knitting a pair of lambswool stockings for old Tamar Lloyd, with Fluff upon his shoulder, and Swiftpaws at his feet.

"What, love?" replied Mrs. Pemble.

"Do you know that there are a great many things in Shakespear that I don't understand?"

"I should hope so, my dear; besides, I told you not to read Shakespear indiscriminately."

"Yes, but you said I might read 'Hamlet,' and when I took it up I could not put it down; but there is one thing which Ophelia says that I do not understand, though to be sure it is in her madness, yet Shakespear is generally so true to nature that even in madness he would have kept some link of truth on which to string her ravings."

"That is a very just remark of yours, May; but what is the particular passage you allude to, and which you say you do not understand?"

"Why, where she says, 'Some say the owl is a baker's daughter.' Now, has that any latent meaning, or is it meant as an illustration of the total wandering of Ophelia's mind?"

"You are not the only one that passage has puzzled, and Dr. Johnson tried to elucidate it by a piece of cockney topography, telling us that bankers once lived at the sign of the Owl, in Lombard Street, and therefore he takes it for granted that *baker's* daughter was a mis-print, and that Shakespear meant *banker's* daughter; but a more recent, though nearly contemporary critic with Dr. Johnson, commenting upon this surmise of his, has, I think, hit upon the real meaning of it, by giving us an old fairy-tale, current in Herefordshire and Warwickshire up to the time he wrote (1804 but more especially so at the time of Shakespear."

"Oh!" exclaimed Charley, laying down his stocking and pricking up his ears at the word fairy-tale, "and do you know it?"

"Yes, I was going to tell it to you, when you interrupted me, which you should never do anybody who is speaking, even if you know, or think you know, what they are going to say,—much less if you do not, and wish to do so."

"Oh! beg *oo's* pardon," said he, putting up his little rosy lips to be kissed. "Here's me, now, quite quiet, and there's *oo*; so go on with the fairy-tale."

"Well, here it is: A certain fairy, disguised as a poor half-starved old woman, went to a baker's shop and begged some dough from the baker's daughter, who very grudgingly gave her a small piece; but the old woman, without making any complaint of her niggardliness, further humbly requested to be allowed to bake her piece of dough in the baker's oven; but when it was baked it had swelled to such an enormous size, larger than any of the baker's loaves, that the baker's daughter refused to let her have it, but flung her another small piece of dough, no bigger than the first, and said she might bake *that* instead; but this one also swelled in the oven, even larger than the first, so on it the baker's daughter also seized, giving the poor old woman a little tiny scrap of dough, even smaller than the two former ones."

"What a shame!" broke in Charley.

"But this one," continued Mrs. Pemble, "becoming the largest of all, shared the same fate as the other two, whereupon the disguised fairy, convinced of the avaricious, uncharitable disposition of the baker's daughter, could no longer restrain her indignation; but, resuming her proper form, she struck the culprit with her hand, who immediately flew out of the window in the shape of an owl, leaving *all* her bread to burn, and kept up a melancholy hooting round her father's house for ever after. Now, as Shakespear has frequent allusions to these popular legends of all lands, unlike his more pedantic but less gifted contemporaries, Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher, who disdained such trifles, it is doubtless this universal knowledge and happy adaptation of popular lore which always, and in each succeeding age, makes him strike home to the hearts of his cosmopolite readers."

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Pemble," said May; "I'm sure that *must* be the real solution of Ophelia's 'baker's daughter.'"

"Did *Sakespear* write any more fairy-tales?" inquired Charley.

"Nonsense, Charley," laughed Linda, "Shakespear was a great poet."

"Well, but *don't* poets write fairy-tales?"

"Generally," smiled Mrs. Pemble.

"Then, why, the other day, when I said I'd be a poet, to write a long poem much longer than Mother Hubbard, upon Fluff and Swiftpaws, did you say that you hoped I would not? Is it any harm to write poetry?"

"No, certainly not; on the contrary, it ought to be beneficial,—that is, ennobling both to those who write and those who read it. But what I meant was, that I hoped you would not be what is called an author of any sort, by profession."

"But why?"

"You are rather too young to understand why; but what are called literary men by profession have generally three vices that render their families and everybody belonging to them miserable; I mean intense vanity, selfishness, and ambition; and though there have been and are many bright exceptions to this rule, yet as a general one, it holds good."

"Then do poets and people who write fairy-tales never do any good?"

"It's to be hoped they often do. I told you you were too young to understand my meaning; but I'll tell you one very good thing of a poet, the Italian poet Metastasio."

"Oh! but though May and Linda understand Italian poetry, I don't."

"It is the poetry of Nature, Charley, and that every one can understand, even little children—when they have kind hearts and are good children like you. Once upon a time——"

"Oh, then, it's a fairy-tale!"

"Very like one, only that it really happened. Once upon a time, then, poor Metastasio was *very* poor indeed, and he was only known at Vienna, where he happened to be staying, as an assistant-writer for the opera, under Apostolo Zeno, a person with whom he had contracted a great intimacy and friendship; and this Zeno, dying after a short illness, and knowing Metastasio's almost destitute circumstances, left him his whole fortune, amounting to fifteen thousand pounds sterling—a large sum to a man who had not as a certainty, wherewithal to get bread from one day to another. But Metastasio, hearing that Zeno had poor relations at Bologna, went there, and, having sought them out, told them that although his deceased friend had left him his whole fortune he could only suppose that he had done so in trust till he could find out the most deserving of his kindred, in order to divide it equally amongst them, which he immediately did, without retaining a single fraction of it for himself."

"And were Zeno's relations such wretches as to accept it *all*?" exclaimed her three auditors at once.

"I'm sorry to say that they were."

"Poor Metastasio!"

"Not so—rich Metastasio, with such a heart, more golden than his numbers. Besides God amply rewarded him; for the celebrated Gravina, who had taken him under his protection, when he died, left him his whole estate, and afterwards Charles the Sixth invited him to Vienna, and appointed him Poet-Laureate, and the Empress Maria Theresa bestowed on him magnificent presents, as

did Ferdinand the Sixth of Spain ; but what was most remarkable of all was, that from his unblemished private character and his consummate tact he retained all this royal favour for fifty years."

"But who was Metastasio, then," asked Linda, "that Gravina should have taken him under his protection?"

"He was the son of a common soldier of the name of Trapassi, and Gravina it was who called him Metastasio, which is merely a translation of his own names into Greek ; but he was only ten years old, three years older than you, Charley, when he began to show his poetical talents."

"What are poetical talents?"

"Why, the power of writing poetry or verses."

"Oh, such as I made on Fluff and Swiftpaws."

"I don't exactly remember what those were."

"I'll tell them to you ;" and down went the stocking, and up jumped Charley, breaking down several times in his eagerness to repeat this wondrous composition.

"I don't know about the poetical talent," smiled Mrs. Pemble ; "but there can be no doubt, I think, about the poetical vanity."

"Oh ! now I know what they were. Listen May, listen Linda, listen all of you—

"I love cats and dogs, I love a great many,
But I love Fluff and Swiftpaws the best of any !"

The universal laugh that followed this effusion was joined in by the author himself, who did not doubt but it was unbounded applause that he was receiving ; and in order to leave no doubt as to that fact, he said, with an air of triumph, as soon as the laugh had subsided—

"Now isn't *that* poetry?"

"I'm afraid not exactly ; there are rather too many feet, in the first place."

"Too many feet !" exclaimed the youthful bard, most manfully resisting the criticism ; "but dogs and cats *have* four feet."

"My dear Charley," laughed May, "one would really think you had been to the National School to be thoroughly grounded in cats' paws by Mr. Jowl."

"I don't mean the dogs' or cats' feet, Charley," said Mrs. Pemble, "but syllables in poetry are called feet, and one of your lines are longer than the other."

"Are they?" said Charley with a look of crest-fallen and melancholy resignation, and, giving his shoulders a shake, he added with a sigh, "I hope one of Tamar Lloyd's feet are not longer than the other, or I shall have to do all this stocking over again. Will you look at it, if you please, Mrs. Pemble, to see if I have turned the heel properly?"

"And how are poor old Tamar and Taffey Lloyd?" asked Mrs.

Pemble, taking the stocking and also taking up some stitches that Charley had dropped, "for you went with Jenkins to see them this morning."

"Oh! Taffey was very well for he was out at work, but poor old Tamar's eyes were quite sore with the smoke, for her cottage smokes so terribly I was so sorry for her."

"There is no use in being sorry for people, Charley, unless we look about us and consider what we can do to help them."

"I *did* look in all my pockets, but I had no money, not even my lucky sixpence with the hole in it, for *that* I had given to a boy with a monkey and a hurdygurdy."

"I don't mean money; it is not always money that can serve people, which is very fortunate, as those who have plenty of money are seldom inclined to part with even a very small portion of it to serve their fellow-creatures. But don't you remember the other day reading the fable of the lion and the mouse?—which shewed you how the smallest and most insignificant creatures may, with perseverance and a sincere wish to do so, sometimes serve the greatest; and though you are a very little boy, and therefore not a very expert carpenter just yet, still, don't you think if I were to put you in the way of making something, with all those nice tools you have got, that would free poor Taffey Lloyd's cottage entirely from smoke, that that would be a great deal better than all the toys you could make?"

"Oh, yes! that it would!" cried Charley, jumping on her lap and throwing his arms round her neck; "*do* tell me! and I'll make it directly."

"You cannot quite make it directly; but you may set about it directly, for the sooner you begin it the sooner it will be finished."

"But it's not a chimney, though; is it?"

"No; for *that* is a bricklayer's work, and you are only a carpenter."

"Oh!" said Charley, considerably relieved, as if he thought that anything under a chimney he *might* achieve.

"Now I must tell you," resumed Mrs. Pemble, "that the cause of chimneys smoking is from a vertical wind, or what some call an eddy-wind; but the effects of this wind are very easily counteracted in the way I shall describe to you."

"What is counteracted?"

"Prevented: if you were to eat a poisonous berry in the fields, and Dr. Marsh gave you something that would hinder it from poisoning you, that would be to counteract the poison. Now the way to prevent the smoke is, to put on the top of the chimney a box, in each of whose sides is a little door hanging on hinges, and kept open by a thin iron rod running from one side to the other, and fastened by a ring in each end to a staple. When there is no wind these doors remain at rest, and each forms an angle of forty-

five degrees, which is decreased on the windward side in proportion to the force of the wind, and increased in the same ratio on what is called the leeward side. If the wind be very strong, the door opposed to the wind becomes close, while the opposite one is opened as wide as it can be; but if the wind strikes the corner of the box, it shuts two doors and opens the two opposite ones. I have never known this plan to fail; so if you will send for George Davis, the carpenter, I will explain it to him, and he will show you how to make it. But stay, first bring me that sheet of foolscap paper off of the writing-table, and I'll make a little model of it, which will give Davis a better idea of it than any explanation."

"Oh! thank you?" cried Charley, bounding off of her lap to go for the paper; "but why," asked he, as he gave it to her, "do they call this paper by such a funny name? Is it because they make the fools' caps for dunces with it, such as I see on the children sometimes in the National School?"

"No! You remember reading in your little History of England about poor King Charles the First, who had his head cut off?"

"Oh, yes! poor King Charles!"

"Well, when he found his revenues—that is, his money—short, he granted certain privileges, amounting to monopolies. A monopoly is for one person or a small number of persons to seize upon anything and keep it all to themselves, letting no one else have any, just as if you and Linda were to seize upon a basket of cherries or grapes, and let no one else have any, which would be very selfish and very unjust; and such were the monopolies Charles the First granted to fill his exchequer with money, and which were among the causes which at last made him lose his head. But amid these monopolies was the manufacture of paper, the exclusive right of which was sold to certain persons, who grew rich and enriched the Government at the expense of those who were obliged to use paper. At that time all English paper bore in water-marks the royal arms; the Parliament under Oliver Cromwell made jests of this law in every possible manner, and, among other indignities to the memory of Charles the First, it was ordered that the royal arms should be removed from the paper, and a fool's cap and bells be put in the place of them. These in their turn were removed when Cromwell's Parliament was prorogued; but paper of this size, on which parliamentary journals are still written, to this day is called foolscap; and, all things considered, the name is perhaps more appropriate than ever."

"My dear Linda, in what a way you are sitting with your shoulders up to your ears," said Mrs. Pemble, as soon as Charley had left the room to send for the carpenter.

"I know I am," laughed Linda; "but it's only over the schoolroom fire."

"Only over the schoolroom fire! That *only* is a terrible word, Linda, being the traitor in the camp of conscience that lets in

every evil. I am sorry you have so soon forgotten good old Lady Margaret Maynard's maxim that I told you:

'SIT AS YOU WOULD BE SEEN,
WALK AS YOU WOULD BE MET.'

"No, dear Mrs. Pemble, I have not forgotten it; but I was thinking _____"

"What were you thinking?"

"Why, I did not quite understand, when you were speaking to Charley just now about poets, your classing ambition with vanity and selfishness, and calling it a vice; because Miss Prosser was always telling us that we *ought* to have ambition, that we could do nothing without it, and that if we only stirred the fire, or lifted a *chewreen*, we ought to have the ambition to do it well."

"A what, Linda?"

"A *chewreen*."

"I presume you mean tureen, which is pronounced tureen."

"Miss Prosser always called it *chewreen*."

"Well, but you told me Miss Prosser always called *culinary*, as if it had two ll's, and inimical, in-im-my-cal, and misconstrue miss-con-strew, and colleagues co-leagues, and indecorous *indeckerus*—with a great many other words, all of which I have often told you was a vulgar, vicious, provincial pronunciation; and you have just now also given a proof of the bad effects of not knowing the relative value and distinction of words, for when Miss Prosser told you you ought to have the ambition to do everything well, she was quite right in her theory, but wrong in her mode of expressing it, for she meant that you should have the *emulation* to do everything as well as it can be done. Now emulation is the virtue of the same quality of which ambition is the vice; for emulation has for its basis perseverance and *humility*, and is never satisfied with its own achievements as long as they can be improved upon. This is both laudable in the person exercising it, and beneficial to the community at large, though it never traffics but with its own honest capital of energy and diligence. Whereas ambition is ever grasping at what belongs to others beyond its own legitimate sphere; for ambition, in fact, is nothing but an exaggerated pride which snatches the reins from reason, and assumes an arbitrary, supercilious air, looking down with contempt upon the rest of mankind as if it, as centered in the pronoun *I*, were autocrat of the universe. It is the source of envy, hatred, and detraction; it gloats on revenge, and chafes if all do not pay it homage. There is no crime before which an ambitious nature recedes. Blind, capricious, perfidious, cruel and unflinching, there is no deed, however dark, that ambition will not perpetrate—no web of wiles it will not weave. Offend it, and farewell mercy and hope! Orpheus moved the rocks and the woods; he could not have moved ambition, for no design is too

black for it to harbour—no attempt too sacrilegious to deter it—and no person, or thing, too holy for it to profane. Such a two-edged passion is it, that it is at once a murderer and a martyr, for it is equally wicked and miserable; and, to sum up all its antithetical struggles in a single sentence, while it vaunts itself as a soaring passion, it is in reality *the* most grovelling one of the whole range,—for through what immund infamies will not ambition wade?”

“I am very glad to know the difference between ambition and emulation,” said Linda; “and as for ambition, I shall despise it; and I think I shall always, for the rest of my life, have a dread of ambitious people, and take *a deal* of trouble to keep out of their way.”

“You cannot do better; only, if you please, dear Linda, say a great deal, instead of *a deal*, of trouble to keep out of their way, which is what Anne, the housemaid, or George, the groom, would say.”

“Miss Prosser always said *a deal*; and the other day I was reading the translation of a German tale, a great many of the scenes of which take place at the Court of the Empress Maria Theresa; and even she, the Empress, says to one of the characters, ‘I have taken *a deal* of trouble to find out where you were, and had thought of you *a many* times.’”

“Well, my dear, that only proves that German, as well as French books may be, and are daily translated by vulgar people. Besides, the idiom and genius of languages differ, and what are vulgarisms in the idiom of one language, are not such in that of another; in French, for instance, you address persons as ‘Mademoiselle’ and ‘Monsieur,’ and it would be *mauvais ton* not to do so; whereas in English it is considered vulgar to ‘Miss’ and ‘Sir’ people. And herein consists the great difference between a good and a bad translator—a bad one invariably translates *literally*, which fails to convey the sense of the author; a good one, who understands the genius of both languages, finds—as there are in *all* languages—*equivalent* proverbs or idioms, though expressed in different words; for instance, if you were translating *cela c’est une pierre dans mon jardin*, you would not render it ‘that is a stone in my garden,’ because we have no such *saying* in English; but we have the same idea and meaning, only we express it differently, by saying, ‘that is a cut at me.’ So it is even with the *argot*, or slang, of all nations; its purport, or the ideas it is meant to convey, are generally similar, but the wording of those ideas is almost invariably different. Therefore, a thing being in print, or in a book, does not make it upon *that* account either right, or true, for error is not precedent; and the curious ignorance of foreigners with regard to everything English, both historical and national, is a source of unfailling amusement to us. How often have you laughed at the description I gave you of that play I saw at the Porte St. Antoine in Paris, the

scene of which was laid in the Tower of London, the hero being young Edward the Sixth, who had privately married, against Queen Elizabeth's (!) consent, one *Misse Jenny*, for which misdeemeanor the ruthless Bess orders him to be beheaded; but the gaoler, who is also the executioner, and who has an amiable sympathy for unfortunate lovers, and rejoices in the thoroughly English name of Tom Wood (pronounced, by the French actor, *Taum Vaude*), is the confidant and bosom friend of the hapless Edward, who, on the eve of his execution, confides his bride, the ci-devant *Misse Jenny*, to his chivalric care, to which he makes an appeal in the following matchless couplet:—

'Taum Vaude! Taum Vaude! rappelle toi;
Qu'il coule dans ses veines le plus noble sang d'Angleterre,
Son bisaieule a été même deux fois Lord Maire!'

"Frederic le Maitre also, in his play of Edmund Kean, brings all epochs of the reigns of George the Third and Fourth to a focus, in a most extraordinary and miraculous manner, making the Duchess of Devonshire in love with Kean, the Prince of Wales and Charles Fox being his rivals, and following the Duchess to his dressing room at Drury Lane, while George the Third and Queens Charlotte and Caroline (!) are spectators at the play where Kean is to act, as soon as he can get rid of his little dilemmas in the green-room. I only wonder that, as they may read in any old newspaper of that day, that 'The Right Honble. William Pitt dined yesterday, May 15th, 1804, with the Grocers' Company, of which he is a member,' that some enterprising French dramatist has never pounced upon this incident as a fine subject for a *drame*, setting forth how this extraordinary young man, by the mere force of genius alone, rose, from being a grocer's apprentice, to be Prime Minister of England!—only hinting at an unhappy attachment between him and the lovely Queen Adelaide, begun in sugar, when she used to purchase her groceries from him, and ending in sorrow, when George the Fourth impeached them both before the House of Lords! Nor, indeed, do we fare a bit better in Germany, for a friend of mine writes me word from Dresden that one Herr Karl Gutznow is completing a five-act play, which is to be acted, in which John Kemble is introduced as the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, negotiating with *Sir William Talfourd, Esq.*, the clever barrister, author of *Ion*, for the production of a new play, called *Dido*!—and while John Kemble is speaking of Victor Hugo, another, *go-ahead* character, not to be behindhand with him, makes honorable mention of the electric telegraph! So you see, my dear Linda, that all things printed, published, and even swallowed and believed, are not gospel."

The two sisters were still laughing at these French and German "romances of history," when Charley returned, towing in the carpenter, which he did greatly to the detriment of his own nails, by

vigorously tugging at his velveteen jacket, as if he feared the giant would escape from him.

"Here is George Davis, Mrs. Pemble; but I can't make him understand about making a box to put the smoke in, and not let it come out."

"I'm not surprised at *that*, Charley," smiled Mrs. Pemble, "for it would be rather difficult. Even the genius, you know, could not manage that; for don't you remember, in the *Tales of the Genii*, when the fisherman broke the vase, how all the smoke issued out? But I'll see if I can't make Davis understand the sort of thing we want for our chimney-top;" and accordingly she very soon did so: but while she was still speaking to him, Gifford knocked at the door, and brought in a card which, she said, Sir Gregory had sent her up. Without taking it off the salver, she read inscribed on it—

Mr. Newton Twitcher.

"If you please, Madam," said Gifford, "there is something written on the back of the card, which Sir Gregory will thank you to read."

And accordingly, taking it up, she read, written in pencil, "Long threatening comes at last! The owner of this card has just been forwarded to us in a note by Lethbridge, who has retreated in the most shabby manner from the encounter; so pray come down that we may at least have equal forces. You and I against Charity and the Philosopher. The girls need not come.—G. K."

"Tell Sir Gregory I'll be down directly," said Mrs. Pemble, throwing the card into the fire; and, as Charley set off full gallop with the carpenter, she said to May and Linda, "You had better practise till I come back, for it's too gloomy to see to draw or work; and you know, dear May, your grandpapa wished you both to learn that motett of Palestrina's, 'I will praise Thy name.'" But as she closed the door, after a slight prelude she heard May singing, in her clear, bell-like, but touching, contralto voice, that charming madrigal of Calcott's,

"Are the white hours for ever fled?"

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH A GENIUS APPEARS WITH A GENIUS
APPEARING.

UPON entering the drawing-room Mrs. Pemble found Mr. Gregory standing with his back to the fire, and Miss Charley sitting in a *cauaise*, on one side of it; but on the other half of the *cauaise*, as a sort of rubicon, she had placed a few volumes of Shakespeare and other harmless and washy poets, so that there was no nearer approach to her than by a chair at the farther end of this settee, upon which now sat a very tall, lanky individual of the superior sex, as was evidenced by his *paletôt* and pantaloons, which latter, by the bye, were of a faint, faded, blotting-paper hue and texture. Their wearer appeared to be labouring under two antipodical embarrassments, to wit—the extreme length of his legs, and the extreme shortness of the feeble dust-coloured stubble thinly scattered over his cheeks and upper lip, and intended as a representation of whiskers and moustachios. However, all philosopher though he was (for this was no less a personage than Mr. Newton 'Twitcher'), he did not appear by any means *inclined*, though prepared to do so (at least by nature), to go all lengths, as his nether limbs seemed by far the most refractory of his two dilemmas, for when poked under his chair they would *not* remain there, or when *struck out* with a sudden motion as if about to swim to the other end of the room, neither would they persevere in that onward course, but kept continually returning to their former *retiro* under the chair, with a sort of sudden jerky Jack-in-the-box movement, which, for a man of sedentary habits, was a providential dispensation that must have completely supplied the place of ordinary walking exercise. His capillary conundrums he managed better as he was continually clutching their visionary vastness, as Macbeth does the phantom dagger. His face was long, square, and fallow, with the exception of two high cheek-bones, which, like himself, were very deep red, though, unlike his manners, were extremely polished. His eyes, though black, had no more lustre than that free-and-easy fruit for the million called blackberries, being about as round and not much larger. But of what use is an eye without a hook? And that *sine qua non* was supplied by his nose, only that it hooked *upwards*, and, being exceedingly small and sharp, looked like some poor solitary moth that had lost its way in that vast desert of face. His hair was of the same dark, dusty brown as the stubble on his cheeks and upper lip, but stood straight up, gathered to a point, like the choke of an artichoke. His forehead was high, but retreating; his eyebrows thin and ragged, which,

added to his immense height and extreme thinness, gave him the appearance of a sort of zoöphite asparagus run to seed. As he wore spectacles, and had a trick of bending down his head while he raised his eyes, this gave the latter, when seen above the horizon of his spectacles, the appearance of a pair of small twin moons in eclipse. His voice was squeaky, and conveyed the idea of being an affected or assumed voice, and this gave an additional weakness to his words, (for had Socrates had such a voice his wisest sayings could not have escaped being mistaken for foolish sallies,) more especially as it was accompanied by a real or affected hesitation.

"Mr. Newton Twitcher,—Mrs. Pemble," said Sir Gregory as she entered, when up rose Mr. Twitcher like a waterspout, and having bowed, or rather butted forward, fell down again upon the other side into his chair.

"Mr. Twitcher," resumed Sir Gregory, as if kindly to call him off from poor Miss Charity, who was vainly holding her hand to her ear trying to catch the very elaborate account he was giving her of his book, himself, his attributes, habits, pleasures, pains, and aspirations, or rather *assurances*, which he seemed to think was a topic of world-wide and all absorbing interest.

"Mr. Twitcher," resumed Sir Gregory, addressing himself to Mrs. Pemble, "has been in our part of the world before, about three or four months ago."

"Ah! ye—yes; ah! I—a—had intended *then* to—a—a—a—have paid my respects to Miss Kempenfelt, hearing she was so very *literary*; but—a—a—my mother is always foolishly alarmed when I leave home without letting her know where I am, which I do to write more quietly, and—a—also to give lectures which—a—one's own family don't—a—a—appreciate. An excellent person my mother, but not sufficiently intellectual for me; a—in fact one's own family never knows what's *in one*, and are always surprised at one's success in the world."

"I wonder," put in Sir Gregory with imperturbable gravity, "that *your's* should be surprised at anything you do."

"You are very good!" bowed Mr. Twitcher, raising his eyes in eclipse over his spectacles, as he thought he had received a justly-merited compliment; for his vanity was of the same tough and comprehensive kind as the pouch of the pelican, for there was nothing it could not swallow or contain. "Ah! ah! but, as I was about to say, I should at *that* time have sought an interview with Miss Kempenfelt, thinking *she* would have appreciated me and comprehended the drift of my great work, but that the very day Mr. Lethbridge had promised me a note of introduction I received a letter from my father (forwarded through my publisher, the only person—a—a—I ever let know my movements), saying—a—that—a—my mother was dangerously ill, and begging me to—a—return home: and I thought if—a—anything happened to her, none of them would be capable of writing a proper paragraph for the

county paper, and therefore I had better return, as the editors of all papers, I find, never refuse to put in anything I send them; and besides, as I sometimes relieve the abstruseness of profounder study by quaffing a cup of Hippocrene, in other words,—a—a—a—flirting with the Muses, I had prepared an elegy——”

“And pray,” interrupted Sir Gregory, with great bluntness and undisguised disgust, “*did* the poor lady die?”

“My mother? Oh!—a—a—no; but,—a—with a very slight alteration, I can convert the lines into something else, for I have immense facility in every species of composition.”

To this modest announcement Sir Gregory made no reply, but merely exchanged looks with Mrs. Pemble, which said, almost as plainly as words could have spoken it, “Did you in all your life ever see or hear so conceited, shallow-pated, and shallow-hearted an ass?”

While poor Miss Charity, having lost all this intermediate tirade, and seeing there was now a pause in the conversation, again put her hand to her ear, and said, addressing Mr. Newton Twitcher—

“I beg your pardon, but I did not catch the name of the work that you are about to publish.”

“Ahem!” replied Mr. Twitcher, clearing his voice, and getting his squeak, if possible, more in alto than usual, that such an important piece of information might not a second time escape her, “ahem! ‘MAN IN PARADISE AND MAN IN PARLIAMENT!’”

“‘*Man in Petticoats and Man in Peppermint*!’” repeated Miss Charity, starting back, “What a strange title!”

Mr. Twitcher corrected her mistake, by again screaming out the right title, and adding, as he flung up two pantomimic notes of admiration in the air with the index and second finger of his right hand, “You perceive the depth and subtlety of my meaning?”

“Meaning!” echoed Miss Charity, catching the last word, “no! I can’t perceive any meaning in it! What on earth has Paradise to do with Parliament?”

“Ah! just so, that is the beauty of it. To the superficial reader this title is a dead letter, absolute Chingalee to a Laplander; but the philosophical mind immediately begins to enquire “what is the difference between man in Paradise and man in Parliament?”

Here Mr. Twitcher paused, and looked alternately at his three auditors, as much as to say, “Knowing your capacities will never reach it, I’ll kindly appear to give you a chance of finding it out.” But Miss Charity, who had not heard the query, but only saw the querist’s look of importance and superiority, tossed her head; while Mrs. Pemble, who had both heard the one and seen the other, turned away hers, to laugh; consequently, there was no one left to reply but Sir Gregory, who did so by saying, “Why, between two such extremes, I suppose the only way to arrive at the *naked* truth is to return to first principles and stop at man in Paradise.”

"Not stop at," interposed the literal Mr. Twitcher. "I never stop at anything."

"So I should suppose," *sotto voced* Sir Gregory.

"But, to return, and begin with man in Paradise;—yes," continued Mr. Twitcher, "and *then* I proceed with the devil's influence, as first exercised in Paradise, and *still* exercised in Parliament."

And once more Mr. Twitcher paused, and looked round for wonder and admiration; so finding he was again expected to speak, Sir Gregory said:

"Ah! those two sections of your work I suppose for brevity's sake, you entitle 'How' and 'What?'"

It was now Mr. Twitcher's turn to be at fault, and with a noble candour he confessed that he did not understand.

"Why, 'How,' would exemplify *how* the Devil tempted Man in Paradise. As that is now a matter of history it would merely require to be recapitulated; but Man in Parliament, at least most men now in it, are still a mystery;—so then would come the analyzation of the '*what*' the Devil they do there?"

"Some of them; but there again, don't you think *WE LITERATI* shine pre-eminently?"

"I'm sorry to differ from you; but I do not think in all St. Stephen's booth (which far exceeds Richardson's for buffoonery,) that there are to be found such thoroughly unprincipled, and utterly ridiculous political mountebanks as your *Littérateurs* by profession."

"Oh! oh!" protested the literary Mr. Twitcher, who felt that the whole republic of letters was insulted, and that *that* republic *gêtaît lui*.

"Yes, Sir," persisted Sir Gregory, "if it is not ridiculous for one 'distinguished author,' as they call themselves, to assume the honest vehemence of sincerity upon *any* question, after having forsworn himself upon *all* for a quarter of a century upon every hustings in the kingdom, and to suck as many oranges during a debate as would furnish a stock-in-trade for a dozen Jew-boys, or a dessert for 'a whole wilderness of monkeys,' I don't know what is; and if it is not also the very *ne plus ultra* of the ridiculous for a literary gentleman, because he has carefully crammed and coddled a speech upon some particular motion, for six weeks prior to that expected motion; when lo! the political wind changes, and the motion is withdrawn, to insist upon letting off the aforesaid speech upon the unhappy House, which has already been speechified into a perfect state of catalepsy."

But Mr. Newton Twitcher, who could so thoroughly enter into the feeling of not letting an individual or collective audience escape on any terms or under any circumstances, however *à propos de bottes*, from an iota of his own lucubrations, entirely waived that phase of the subject, and setting two of his long, lean,

grayhound-fingers to hunt the *hair* on his upper lip, merely said—

"But don't you think it very possible for a man to change his politics from conviction, and therefore to be very sincere in that change—in fact, to do so from patriotism?"

"From what?"

"From patriotism;" and again Mr. Twitcher's fingers hunted, without disappearing, among the stubble.

"I *have* heard the word before, and read of the thing, but I don't think it is to be found now-a-days; but that which does duty for such, is nothing more than a sort of *mât de cocagne* clambering up the slippery pole of popularity for what is to be got by it."

"Ah! Popularity;—good subject! I have lectured upon it, and think of writing an ode upon it."

"I suppose you know Cumberland's Ode to Popularity?"

"No,—a—a—no, I do not, for I—a—a—have so little time—a—that I seldom read any poetry but my own; but I—a—have no objection to—a—hear it. A—sometimes one—a—picks up ideas."

Picks out ideas would have been nearer the truth, as Mr. Twitcher, considering himself a sort of Parnassian bee, helped himself liberally to whatever came in his way, convinced that *he* could only improve what he took. Sir Gregory, not desiring better than to have a sort of interlude to Mr. Twitcher's egotistical gabble, and at the same time to hear his own opinions so well expressed, without further solicitation repeated Cumberland's admirable ode:—

"O POPULARITY! thou giddy thing!

What grace or profit dost thou bring?

Thou art not honesty, thou art not fame:

I cannot call thee by a worthy name,

To say I hate thee were not true,—

Contempt is properly thy due;

I cannot love thee and despise thee too.

Thou art *no* patriot but the veriest cheat

That ever traffick'd in deceit;

A state empiric bellowing loud

Freedom and frenzy to the mobbing crowd;

And what car'st thou if thou canst raise

Illuminations and huzzas!

Tho' half the city sink in one vast blaze?

A patriot! no; for thou dost hold in hate

The very peace and welfare of the state.

When anarchy assaults the Sovereign's throne,

Then is the day—the night—thine own!

Then is thy triumph when the foe,

Levels some dark insidious blow,

Or strong rebellion lays thy country low.

Thou canst affect humanity, to hide

Some deep device of monstrous pride;

Conscience and charity pretend

For compassing some private end;

And in conventicle and canting note
 Long Scripture passages canst quote;
 When persecution rankles in thy throat.
 Thou hast no sense of nature at thy heart;
 No ear for science, and no eye for art;—
 Yet confidently dost decide at once
This man's a wit and that a dunce;
 And (strange to tell), howe'er unjust,
 We take thy dictates upon trust;
 For if the world *will* be deceived it *must*.
 In truth and justice thou hast no delight;
 Virtue thou dost not know by sight:
 But as the chemist by his skill
 From dross and dregs a spirit can distil,
 So from the prisons or the stews,
 Bullies, blasphemers, cheats, or Jews,
 Shall turn to heroes if they serve thy views.
 Thou dost but make a ladder of the mob,
 Whereby to climb into some courtly job;
 There, safe reposing, warm and snug,
 Thou answerest with a patient shrug:
 'Miscreants, begone! who cares for you?
 Ye base-born, bawling, clamorous crew,
 You've served *my* turn: now vagabonds, adieu!'

"And these last lines are more especially applicable to your literary-politico adventurers in the House of Commons," concluded Sir Gregory.

"Ah! well,—a—we must allow them cleverness, I think," said Mr. Twitcher,—which, by the bye, is the Anglo-Saxon varnish for all iniquity.

"Oh! decidedly, for whoever denied it to their prototype, the devil."

"Who are you talking of, Gregory?" asked Miss Charity.

Approaching her ear he named the political and literary charlatans he had more especially in view.

"Oh, the horrors!" exclaimed she, throwing up her hands, "I only wonder his Satanic Majesty should leave them so long out on mortgage; for I am sure they must be a loss to his dominions."

"My dear Charity, why should he hurry them, when he sees they are *going to him as fast as they can*?"

Mr. Twitcher had not heard a syllable of all this, as he had been revolving in his own mind that philosophy was evidently beyond the capacity of the *borné* baronet and his deaf sister, and that, consequently, it was throwing pearls before swine—to talk to *them* of his great work, *MAN IN PARADISE, AND MAN IN PARLIAMENT*. So he resolved to change the *venue*, and dazzle them with his versatility; therefore, without anything leading to that interesting communication, he suddenly informed them that—few persons were aware of the innumerable phases in his character, or how nicely the practical balanced the ideal. "In short," said he, "at this very moment in continuing my great work, I am contemplat-

ing a work of fiction—a mere novel in fact; but I shall not begin it till the week before Pheese, my publisher, intends bringing it out, for I write immensely fast. What is manual labour to most persons, is almost volition with me.”

“As you talk of publishing a novel, I take it for granted that you have taken the necessary preliminaries of being well up, in, and with the clique?” said Sir Gregory.

“What clique?” innocently, not to say ignorantly, inquired Mr. Twitcher.

“Why the Gore House clique, to be sure. It is true the High Priestess of that Temple of universal humbug is no more; but all its votaries remain in full force, and as an organized band consider themselves (Heaven forgive me for so profaning that noble line of Lucan’s!)

‘Eripuit cœlo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis;’

which in Scotland would be simplified into the ‘Scratch me, and I’ll scratch you, clique;’ and of this clique, which constitutes at once a literary sinking fund and swimming school, Fudgester of ‘the Excrutiater,’ is the old, that is to say the oldest scratch. Whatever trash this inquisitorial clique puffs is sure to swim, and whatever works it lapidates are sure to sink.”

“Fudgester; who is Fudgester?” interrogated Mr. Twitcher.

“That is not so easy to tell you; but if you ask me *what* he is, I should answer, I should tell you, to that especial clique and to every ready-made celebrity, he is what ‘Don Juan’ was to ‘Oil Macassar;’ what ‘Lord Aldborough’ was to ‘Holloway’s Pills;’ and what ‘The Dowager Countess of Castle Stewart’ is to ‘Du Barry’s Revalenta Arabica’—a providence and a puff, an endorser of miraculous effects; in short, a backer of bills drawn to any amount on public credulity. But after you have had the happiness to obtain an introduction to Fudgester, the best way of insuring his puffage and pilotage is to exhume some standard, lucky dog of a book which has *had* its day, and consequently is completely forgotten, like every other popular idol. This done, re-mould it, by casting it into a modern form. You may keep precisely the same *dramatis personæ*, only be sure to re-christen them. The same incidents and the same dialogue will do, without changing a letter, and of course the same jokes, for we all know the tough longevity of jests; and the gipsej jesters that have kidnapped them in all ages, from the *FACETIÆ* of HIEROCLES, and all the intermediate generations of Rabelais, Ben Jonson, Joe Miller, Foote, Quin, Garrick, Lord Chesterfield, George Selwyn, and Sheridan, down to Sydney Smith and Lord Alvenly, among the latter-day wits.”

“But—but—” objected and suggested Mr. Twitcher, though evidently grasping at the idea, “I—a—should be afraid that—a—

some readers, at all events among the reviewers—denounce so *wholesale* a plagiarism.”

“You cannot exaggerate the profound and extensive ignorance of the novel-reading British public, nor over-rate the venality of the *soi-disant* critics of that clique and their organs, such as the ‘Asineum,’ ‘My Grandmother’s Magazine,’ the ‘Literary,’ the ‘Jackass,’ and the ‘New Quarterly,’ for instance.”

“The ‘New Quarterly?’ I never heard of that.”

“Ah! there are many persons in the same predicament. It is a vulgar, ill-written catch-penny, published by a Scotchman of the name of Snobworth, or Jobworth, or some such name, and established by the clique for the express purpose of puffing themselves and Mr. Dickens’s nauseous imitators, and doing their dirty work by heaping the grossest and most clumsy abuse on their marked victims.”

“By the bye, what do you think of Dickens? Surely *he* is an original writer?”

“Too original by half, and by far too economical a one.”

“I don’t understand,” rejoined Mr. Twitcher. “How *can* a writer be too original. And as for his being an economical writer, I think him a most voluminous one.”

“Why, I call an author who never steals but from himself too original, and one who is always repeating himself too economical. And when you have read *one* of Mr. Dickens’s encyclopædias of pot-house pleasantries, you have read all; for, with new names, the characters and situations are, in one and all, exactly the same.”

“Well, they certainly are. But to return to what you were saying about re-writing other people’s books, I—a—really—a—should fear—a—that—a—as I said before, the—a—plagiarist—”

“Tush! you surely do not dread the classical anathemas of the poetical ancient who *believed* in conscience-stricken authors being haunted by the accusing phantoms of their thefts, and so set up the plagiaristic scarecrow of

‘Stat contra, dicitque tibi, tua pagina Fures?’

That might have been all very well in *his* golden age, when authors *had* consciences; but now-a-days they have no such clog upon their flights.”

“Oh! no, no!” said Mr. Twitcher, repudiating the puerile idea of the stolen page haunting *him* individually; “but—a—a—the reviewers—”

“Ah! I perceive you are afraid of *their* crying ‘stop thief!’ Not a bit of it, *provided* you first arrange your *battue* with the clique, and then they’ll *swear* that every jackdaw you bring down is a pheasant, and every polecat you course is a hare; and, better still, the too confiding British public will take *their* word for the *tail* of fact, and swallow them with as much *gusto* as if they really were *bona fide*, instead of only pseudo, hare and pheasant.”

"What work would you advise me to take?" asked Mr. Twitcher seriously.

"What, to make your own or—"

"Ye—yes," faintly murmured that gentleman, somewhat shocked at this coarse way of calling a *literary licence* by so common-place and pickpocket an epithet.

"Let me see. You must not take 'Tristram Shandy' because that has just been done and swallowed by the public, plastered by the critics (?), puffed by the publisher; and when one solitary reviewer had at length the honesty and temerity to pity Lawrence Sterne for this posthumous burglary committed upon his brains, of course there was instantly a Fudgester to the rescue, when the said Fudgester once more 'gave the world assurance' that he can lie himself, or his gang, into or out of anything—a fact as notoriously plain as the nose (?) on Fudgester's very hideous face. But everyone is neither Fudgester-read nor Fudgester-ridden. There is still 'The Sentimental Journey,' 'Roderick Random,' 'Peregrine Pickle,' 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' 'Tom Jones,' 'Amelia,' 'Joseph Andrews,' 'Humphrey Clinker;' or, if you like to go by long sea down to posterity there are all Richardson's novels still unbroken into. But whichever you take, the great art consists in impressing upon the British public that there is only one merit you claim for the work with which you then present them; and that is, its striking and startling *originality*, because, when you have asserted *this* really and truly *most original* fiction, your literary gang will swear it, and there is not a Miss, from Malvern to Manchester, who will not echo it *et voila comme on fabrique les renommés!*"

Mr. Twitcher appeared perfectly convinced and resolved by this insight into popular authorship, merely remarking that he deprecated the low-life mania there was in literature at present; "for though," added he, "I have sprung from trade myself, still the bent of my mind and tone of my feelings are decidedly aristocratic; and I regret, therefore, that Dickens and Carlyle—they were formerly of different cliques, but are now fused—should ride their hobby of anti-flunkeyism to death."

"Ah! there would be only one way of effectually stopping them on *that* point."

"Do you think anything could do so?"

"Decidedly."

"What? for I am really curious to know."

"Why, making Mr. Dickens, Lord Bleedingheartcourt, Lord Fleetditch, Lord Froth de Pewter, or *even* be(k)nighting him; and at the same time creating Mr. Thomas Carlyle, Baron Göthecant, Lord Haggis, Lord Ursa Major, Lord Fitz Flunkey, 'or the like,' and depend upon it we should *then* have no more poundings of the peerage nor fulminations against flunkeys, for 'Moi et mes *général et* *hormis, cela point de salut,*' is the motto of the whole gang."

"But," interposed the morally, as well as physically, short-

sighted Mr. Twitcher, "I think we must do them the justice to allow that they sometimes greatly praise, not to say puff, books, which are not written by one of their own clique."

"Name even one, for Heaven's sake, as I am always curious to hear what I never heard before."

"Why, 'Jane Eyre,' for instance."

"Thank you, dedicated to one of the Fleet Street oligarchy, in the first instance."

"But a very clever book, do you not think?"

"Most decidedly so, but an exceedingly coarse, and not over proper one as to moral."

"How so? I do not remember anything coarse or immoral in it."

"Had it been ten times more so, the intense man-worship throughout it, by pandering to their passions and habits could not have failed (as it did) to propitiate the clique, who so puffed it. Imprimis, Jane Eyre becomes governess to Mr. Rochester's natural child; thereby fully establishing the perfect matter of course that gentlemen should have those little appendages. Next, she falls in love with Mr. Rochester and he with her, she at first ignoring that he has the little anti-matrimonial impediment in the way of a living wife, though a mad one; he, of course, *comme cela se pratique parmi ces messieurs*—not looking upon this as any obstacle at all. And even Jane Eyre, when she discovered it, philosophises upon the horrors of a man being so situated; but, of course, were a woman afflicted with a mad brute of a husband who added active persecution to all the other tortures he inflicted upon her, there would not be even a human feeling of compassion for her under similar circumstances; however, *cela n'empêche pas les sentimens*, and Jane Eyre continues her *grande passion* for Mr. Rochester, who by the way is as great a brute as most of Miss Brontë's heroes; and making them all such hoggishly, selfish, sensual monsters, as she has done in another ovation to our sex; the moral being, that the more loathsome and worthless a man is, the more devoted and submissive women should be to him, being mere echoes and shadows of their solidity, and only unfemininely, and very improperly, in my old-fashioned opinion, taking the initiative in proclaiming their love and making all the advances. But *this* being another sop to that Cerberus, masculine vanity, instead of being disgusted at it men are delighted with it. With regard to the other portion of 'Jane Eyre,' when I talked of its coarseness, I should have said grossness—as I think the scenes between her and the young clergyman, the future missionary, among the very grossest I ever read, and certainly that a woman ever penned. As for 'Shirley' it has not even cleverness to redeem it, and is, without exception, not only one of the most vulgar, but one of the most disgusting books I ever read, (unless indeed I except 'The Waverley Heights,') for in Shirley the young ladies still continue to make all the advances, and do all the love-making in true

'British *Female*' style; and when one of the disgusting heroes (I forget his name) jilts one of the heroines in the most heartless and mercenary manner, for a person whom he thinks has more money, and, ultimately finding his mistake, and making the discovery that in reality his first love has the money, he returns to her—*she*, in the most *empresée* manner flies into his arms before he has even time to ask her to do so, only too happy to regain such a treasure; the moral of which is, that *any* man, no matter what he is, or how he behaves to her, is conferring an honor on any woman in marrying her. For *a' that, and a' that, with your regular genuine 'British Female' the Husband's the thing for a' that*. 'Vilette' I have not read, so know nothing about it; but indeed, considering the unprincipled profligacy of some of our leading literati, the low ebb of even our theoretical morals, and the indefatigable pains a certain clique take to lower and degrade woman, both as morally responsible and intellectually recipient beings, it is a pity they should ever come in contact with any, even the shadow of a shade superior to the Mrs. Caudles, Mrs. Smiths, and Martha Struggleses, of their own creation, which certainly are the most appropriate '*females*' for *such* males."

"Well, but surely," said Mr. Twitcher, who piqued himself upon his nationality, and consequently devoutly believed that England and the English had not left a single virtue for the use of any other country, but had saddled themselves with them ALL, as part of the National Debt; "surely you think us a moral people?"

"Oh! *very* remarkably, or rather, *peculiarly* so! Our state of society, our laws, politics, literature, and, above all, our criminal statistics and police reports, *prove* us to be eminently such!"

"And yet," resumed Mr. Twitcher, who never could for five minutes together keep from floundering about amid the verdant duck-weed of his much-loved literary goose-pond, "you see, Lord Byron, with all his genius, was not tolerated in England."

"I cry you mercy! *rayez cela de vos papiers*. Lord Byron was not tolerated in England from his *folly*, not on account of his vices, the greatest of which was his having the bad taste to exaggerate them, instead of having the hypocrisy to drape them with their opposite virtues—at least in *print*; but, however great a genius may be, he cannot be *quite* universal, and grasp all things, but invariably leaves some apparently small hiatus for his far less gifted successors to fill up, and which solitary addition at once revolutionizes and rivets the great scheme that had preceded it. Thus the electric fluid was barely mentioned at the end of Newton's '*Optics*;' and it was reserved for Franklin to investigate its wondrous properties, so of *that* branch of science he may fairly be considered the father. Theory was advanced to practice and utility by the invention of the conductor, and evoked into a ubiquitous wizard by the invention of the electric telegraph; and

what electricity is to science, hypocrisy is to vice—at once its sovereign and its slave. But this great power, Lord Byron, if he did not ignore, neglected and disdained; and so, instead of a magnate, he became a martyr to the *verbal* morality of England. But what Franklin was, after Newton, to electricity, so Fudgester and his clique have been after Byron in the utilization of hypocrisy into an omnipotence; and had poor Lord Byron had the advantage of being enrolled in *that* clique, he would never have been so silly as to leave the country; but, above all, he never would have been so idiotically humane as to leave his wife her child, or so insanely honorable as to leave her her whole fortune; on the contrary, his very first move would have been to have turned his wife out of her home to make way for his mistresses—to have taken her child from her, and, if it had survived the murderous neglect of its early years, to have perverted it into an unnatural monster towards its mother; next, to have robbed her of every shilling of her own fortune, and to have made her some swindling allowance of a beggarly pittance, from which he even deducted the Income Tax! He would, further, have hunted her with eternal conspiracies till he had reduced even that pauper dole to the lowest possible ebb; while for his spies, and to write anonymous letters and defamatory paragraphs, he would have employed such honorable tools as his cast-off mistresses and the lower fry of his literary jackals to do this dirty work, he playing the *Grand Seigneur* to his *worthy* literary clique, giving them private theatricals, and bracelets to actresses, while his wife and child wanted the commonest necessities, according to their sphere of life. Had Lord Byron been such a loathsome monster as this, leaving no vice unexhausted and no virtue unassumed, then *he* also would have become an incarnate puff—an ambulating triumph!—maudled over by admiring Misses, dedicated to by manoeuvring Mrs.'s, lied through everything by the Press in general, and through a stone wall, when need had been, by Fudgester and Co. in particular. He had been also the rallying point and patron sinner of all the male and female profligates of London, and, to crown all this long 'homage to virtue' (since that is what hypocrisy* is called), I have no doubt, when age began to exchange his rampant vices for those ugly grave-weeds—wrinkles and grey hairs—the gifted Janus might have wound up by being made professor of Moral Philosophy to the Maids of Honor, or Usher of the Black Rod to some of those solemn social humbugs, which, being a *moral people*, stand us in lieu of every gospel grace and of every Christian virtue."

"Well, you astonish me!" responded Mr. Twitcher—a fact which he illustrated by a pantomimic clutch at his visionary

"Hypocrisy is the homage vice pays to virtue."

stubble, "for I thought our being a moral nation was what we especially plumed ourselves upon."

"That is another affair. It is superfluous to boast of what we really possess, for which reason it is that cowards generally vaunt their courage, and heroes *never*; and misers brag of their liberality while the lavishly open-handed always have closed mouths. But we are not a moral people, and under our present system it is impossible that we should be such;—we are too pre-eminently a political and public-life people to lay any store by those tame realities, private virtues. It is true we *verbally* unite Church and State for the support and better security of the latter; but *this* marriage, like our individual ones, is purely mundane and material; there is nothing spiritual, holy, nor equal in *either*, both being, as to rights and immunities, for the exclusive benefit of the stronger party—the State in the one instance, the husband in the other;—thus realizing the order of things in La Fontaine's fable of 'La Grenouille et le Rat:'

'La grenouille et le lion
Tout en fut; tant et si bien,
Que de cette double proie,
L'oiseau se donne au cœur joie,
Ayant de cette façon,
À souper chère et poisson.'

"It is true that from this *raison des plus fort* arrangement, as regards individual marriages, Nemesis sometimes ordains that the rest of the fable should also be enacted, and that—

'La ruse la mieux ourdie,
Peut nuire à son inventeur;
Et souvent la perfidie
Retourne sur son auteur.'

"But look to our public schools; and let us impartially ask ourselves what are the *fruits* likely to spring up from the seed sown by what is called a classical education? Let us take, for instance, a Westminster play. We are told the purport of them is to give boys confidence (surely a work of supererogation at Westminster or any other public school), and to teach them the art of speaking; but for this purpose, it cannot be necessary that they should act the plays of Terence,* Sophocles, and Euripides; and, as a matter

* We do not need to be reminded that Philip Melancthon lectured, at Tübingen, upon Virgil and Terence, and that the text of the latter being actually printed in prose at that time, he was also the first to point out to the students the diversified Iambic measure, and, with great labour, to restore the whole to its original metrical arrangement. But, in the first place, Melancthon was then only seventeen; in the next, *exceptions are not rules*, though they prove them; and, moreover, whenever God intends to make an individual an instrument of good to mankind, He is never at a loss not only in spite of, but out of the most adverse

of educational training, it surely cannot be defended that boys at school should be allowed publicly and with applause to repeat sentiments and descriptions before an audience of their seniors (and those some of the gravest and most sacred characters in the kingdom, such as Reverend and Right Reverend Prelates), and dilate upon impurities of the grossest kind, which, if they were not clothed in Latin, it would be *impossible for them to express*—though both by them and by their hearers they are quite as well understood and convey precisely the same ideas as if uttered in plain English. Now against this deep and thorough immersion in these classical impurities, not only countenanced, but inculcated, by the ministers of Christ, alas! the few pure sprinklings from the baptismal font have, and can have, but little counteracting power; and after such a *foundation* for a moral superstructure, no wonder that young gentlemen look upon vice as merely part of their elective franchise, and Church and State as merely a convenient and salutary *working* schedule in the political charter; but as for any vitality or spirituality in their nominal religious creed, *that*, their common sense tells them, is all a farce, so long as there is no earthly necessity for their lives and conduct corresponding with it. And, indeed, if a boy *has* good feelings and pure principles, he is generally sneered out of the one and laughed out of the other at an English public school; while smoking the governor, or *doing* the maternal out of the supplies, are the only parental reminiscences not pulverized by ridicule, or scoffed at as sentimentality. And to show you how the virus circulates through the arteries of the national heart, it was only the other day that I read, in a paper professedly devoted to the improvement of youth, that it was a clever—not *dodge*, but a word to that effect—of Louis Napoleon making a *romance* of his mother's composition, the National air of France;—‘filial affection being one of the *peculiar sentimentalities of the French!*’ Even so; a man no matter how high or how low, who despised, neglected, or behaved unnaturally to his mother, would be *hooted* in France, neither more nor less; but in moral England, so long as he was a good classical scholar or *got on* in his *public* career, if people troubled their heads about so insignificant an affair as a woman's feelings, in any relationship of life, he would only be thought the more ‘manly,’ and a ‘deuced clever fellow,’ for not

means to qualify them for the work. But we *do* say, and will maintain, that mere learning, and more especially classical lore, without a superior and sacred influence of Divine grace, is but a dangerous meteor, like a wandering star, to mislead, with false light, the souls of men, and that for *one* Melancthon, Erasmus, or Ecclampadius that mere learning can produce, it will engender thousands of Lords Bacons, Burleighs and Cranmers, Aristotles, Almericuses, and Abelards—in a word, intellectual sponges, who have imbibed all knowledge save the knowledge of good, and upon whose doomed supremacy is poured the bitter curse that came on Meroz for cowardies or *doubt*—not that they fought *against* God, “but that they came not out.”

attending to such puerilities. If a mother has an unentailed estate to be flattered or cajoled out of, *then*, indeed, it is quite another affair; for, however you may ridicule and despise her, and whatever just cause you may have to do so, or even if you be such an unnatural brute as to use personal violence to her, yet you must always adulate and toady her in public and in print, and *then* you (especially if you *secure* the 'dirty acres' by the dirtiest means) will in your turn be puffed and *prone* as the paragon of sons! the model wrap-rascal of filial piety! The Marquis de Bouillé, in his *Memoirs*, cites a great critic on the French Revolution, who calls that sanguinary juggle '*the hypocrisy of liberty*;' but in our time we have the hypocrisy of philanthropy and progress, and, with our accursed system of *pro bono publico* SHAMS, from first to last, I don't see what else we can expect *but* hypocrisy in all things, since in all things with us to *seem* is everything, to *be* nothing."

"Ah, well!" hummed and ha'd Mr. Twitcher, who never for a moment wandered from his first, and last, and only love—himself, and who moreover always stood up for his order, and, like most geniuses of his calibre, drawing his deductions from himself, had the most exalted ideas of masculine superiority, and the most exaggerated ones of masculine supremacy; "you—a—see—a—the—a—fact is—a—that women not having the—a—capacity to understand us, and enter into our intellectual pursuits, have no ambition, and—a—therefore interfere so terribly—a—with our—a—public career, and—a—that is the reason—a—that—we—a—to a certain degree avoid the—a—*females*—a—of our own family for—a—as you truly say—public life is everything in England. Now I—a—know by myself, I—a—am obliged, positively obliged, to shirk my mother as much as possible, for just as I am on the point of crying *Eureka!* my mother will set everything to flight with 'tea is ready;' or else, when I am chasing the sample Man through the thickets of Paradise, and counting from his hirsute glories the germs of future peoples, the mob of Nations is dispersed with 'Newton, did you know that two of our pigs were pounded again yesterday?' But the worst of all is the total want of sympathy with one's aspirations and pride in one's achievements, for I shall never forget my mother's looks of wonder, nay, almost of terror, the first time she heard I had given a lecture on hydropathy in the Baptist Chapel in our village, which I had hired for the occasion; and as I thought I might one day stand for our town, I had also hired omnibuses to bring all the old women to the lecture; and my mother's surprise, and it was *only* surprise, was disheartening in the extreme."

"Aye!" muttered Sir Gregory,

'Primi in omnibus prælijs oculi vincuntur aures,'"

and then added aloud, "I suppose as your lecture was upon

hydropathy, your mother thought she was only keeping the unities by throwing cold water upon it."

But Mr. Twitcher was too philosophical not to be pun-proof; and, therefore, paying no more attention to it than if it had been another of his mother's pigs in the pound, he returned to the charge with:

"You—a—were saying just now something about the sort of preface I ought to write, if I took one of Fielding's or Sterne's or Smollett's novels, and—a—

"Renovated it, as the Israelites do old coats," put in Sir Gregory. "Well, in that case you must continue to do as the Jews do, and swear that it is spick-and-span new, and that nothing like it has ever been seen before. But, now I think of it, the very best preface that a modern popular author *could* take would be one that is in a very old periodical called 'The Projector,' contemporary, by the bye, with Sterne, Fielding and Smollett. I'll send for the book and read it to you," and he rang the bell, and as soon as Gifford appeared, he said—

"Tell Clayton to give you an old shabby-looking book, in a brown leather binding, that he will find on the writing-table in my dressing-room; and have the goodness to bring it here."

"I'm sorry to hear," said Mr. Twitcher, "that your rector, Mr. Jowl, is not only at loggerheads with Mr. Lethbridge, but also with his own curate, Mr. Meek, whose miserable stipend he wants still further to curtail, which, I must say, is a very great shame, considering that through his patron, the Bishop of —, he is for ever adding not only feathers, but down to his *own* nest."

"That is it!" replied Sir Gregory, "and how often one has occasion to exclaim with Peter Pindar—

'What pity 'tis, in this our goodly land,
That 'mongst the apostolic band,
So ill divided are the loaves and fishes!
Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, Archdeacons,
With ruddy faces, blazing just like beacons,
Shall daily cram upon a dozen dishes;
Whilst half the inferior cassocks think it well
Of beef and pudding e'en to get the smell.'

Gifford here returned with the book, and while Sir Gregory was turning over the leaves in search of the preface he had mentioned, Mr. Twitcher inquired, with feverish anxiety, whether he *really* thought a second person adopting the plan of stealing a whole book would succeed?

"Well," smiled Sir Gregory, "it will or it will not.

'O Laërtiade! quicquid dicam, aut erit aut non.'

—Ah! here it is; and, in my opinion, it is a model of candour and explicitness that would save a fifty-thousand horse, or ass, power of puffery if adopted by certain individuals.

'A DEDICATION'

'Which may serve almost for every book, either in prose or verse; that has been, is, or shall be published.'

'THE AUTHOR TO HIMSELF.'

'Most Honored Sir,—

'These labours, upon many considerations, so properly belong to none as to you—first, because it was *your* most earnest desire alone that could prevail upon me to make them public; next, because I am secure (from that constant indulgence you have ever shown to all that is mine) that no one will so readily take them under their protection, or so zealously defend them as you. Moreover, there is no one who can so soon discover their beauties; and there are some parts which it is possible that few besides yourself are capable of understanding. Sir, the honor, affection and value I have for you are beyond expression, and as great, I am sure, or rather far greater, than any one else has for you. As for any defects, which others may pretend to discover in you, I do faithfully declare I was never able to perceive them, and doubt not but those persons are actuated by a spirit of malice or envy, the inseparable attendants upon distinguished talents and *matchless* merit (!) such as I have always maintained yours to be. It may, perhaps, be looked upon as a violation of modesty to say this to you *publicly*; but you may believe me, that it is no more than I never cease to think of you in private. Might I follow the impulse of my inclination, there is *no* subject which I could expatiate upon with half so much pleasure as your praises; but since something is due to modesty, let me conclude by telling you that there is nothing I so much desire as to see every one entertain the same exalted opinion of you that I do; or nothing that would afford me more sincere pleasure than to render you some signal service; in fact, to place you at that pinnacle of earthly greatness which I think your transcendent merits entitle you to. At all events I shall ever continue,

'My dearest Sir,

'Your most devoted friend,

'And the greatest of your admirers.'

As Sir Gregory concluded this model dedication the first dinner-bell rang, and he was too hospitable not to ask Mr. Twitcher to stay and dine; but, luckily for his wishes, which, for the nonces, ran counter to his hospitality, that gentleman began to suspect that he had gained no votaries at Baron's Court, or, as he himself would have expressed it, that its inmates, poor people! were incapable of appreciating genius. So he declined the invitation, and, to the great relief of all, took his leave, fully convinced in his own mind that philosophers, like prophets, have no honor in their own country, and that Sir Gregory Kempenfelt's prefaces were no better than his mother's pigs! for it's a way they have among

geniuses always to suppose they have been throwing pearls before swine, whenever, however, and wherever it falls out that they have not been VERY SUCCESSFUL!

CHAPTER XIII.

ST. PAUL VERSUS THE REV. JABEZ JOWL.

ABOUT a fortnight had elapsed since Mr. Twitcher's visitation, and Mr. Jowl's denunciations from the pulpit against *works* in general, and Mr. Lethbridge's good works in particular, had become so outrageous and so personal, that, in order to reply to them, the latter had convened a meeting in the Baron's Court school-house, that being the *only* portion of the Rev. Jabez Jowl's parochial territories with which he ever interfered, and that only at Sir Gregory Kempenfelt's particular request, as that school, though free to all to attend who chose to do so, was his own especial and private property. But if the perfection of logic consists in extracting arguments *for* an hypothesis from the very points which apparently make against it, then was the Rev. Jabez Jowl a profound logician; for, after expatiating upon the impious arrogance of man, in even attempting good works, he told his congregation that the strongest proof of the futility and profanity of works was, that when we arrived at a knowledgeable time of life, in the ceremony of confirmation we renewed our baptismal vows "*to renounce the Devil and all his works;*" and one of the Devil's chief works was putting into men's heads that they *could* do any good things. Such deeds, he said, might indeed make them popular among their fellow-men, but would avail them nothing with God, with whom the blood of Christ, sprinkled on the door-posts of their hearts (or, as he called it, *'arts'*), could alone insure them salvation and acceptance, and cause the destroying angel to pass them over unscathed; therefore let them, one and all, beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing who was then amongst them, and whose gifts were gifts unto perdition. Now, poor Mr. Lethbridge being the wolf alluded to Sabbath after Sabbath, thought the least he could do was to give an answering howl, and consequently had announced his intention to have a meeting in the school-room, and there to explain the iniquities of which he had been accused, and defend himself, to the best of his power, against the charge, or rather charges, the rector had made against him. Upon the morning preceding the evening that this meeting was to be held, Mrs. Pemble had experienced a great pain and a great pleasure: the former consisted in her having again lost the brooch containing Harcourt's miniature. They all tried to persuade her that it could

not really be lost; but what she feared was, that she had dropped it in some field, and that, if so, the dew might entirely obliterate it before it was restored to her; though, having offered a reward of £10 for it, an El Dorado in a Welsh village, she was sure that literally no stone would be left unturned to find it. "It is true," said she to May, "that I *could* paint another almost as like, I think, from memory; but then, poor fellow! he sat to me for that one, and his eyes have looked on it, and that gives it an additional value in mine."

"Depend upon it, dear Mrs. Pemble," cried May, throwing her arms round her neck and kissing her, "you will find it again."

"Why, May, how radiant you look! One would almost think you had found it for me; but, dear child, your cheek is very hot."

"Is it?" said May, putting up her own hand to it.

"I think," said Mrs. Pemble, "you had better not go to Mr. Lethbridge's meeting this evening; it is so very damp and cold, and I have no doubt there will be a great crowd there;" and while she spoke she scrutinized the young girl's beautiful face, as if she had been making a chymical analysis of it, but the flushed cheek neither grew redder nor paler, and the large deep violet eyes were raised openly and calmly to hers as May replied—

"Just as you please, dear; but will you tell Mr. Lethbridge that he owes me two Hebrew lessons? I cannot think what has come to him; he used to be punctuality itself."

"To tell you the truth, dear May, I think you would get on much better with some steady old Rabbi, for he seems to me rather a *distract* teacher. As I often remark, you have to ask him a question twice before he answers you, and then I have more than once heard him tell you wrong, and so he has had to correct himself and go all over the ground again; and though Hebrew has to be read backwards, I am not aware that it ought to be learnt so."

"Oh!" laughed May, "he used not to be so absent; but I think Mr. Jowl worries him to death, and gives him more to do, in circumventing his ceaseless annoyances, than he can do; for he used to be always here, and now he scarcely ever has time to stay and dine, or to come of an evening to play at chess with grandpapa."

Mrs. Pemble did *not* think his increased occupations were the cause of his prolonged absences from Baron's Court. However, she kept her thoughts to herself, only determining that very morning again to speak to Sir Gregory, and warn him about the risk he was running in allowing so handsome and so attractive a young man to be the preceptor of such a lovely girl as May; but while all this was revolving in her mind, Linda burst into the room, with her right hand in a little sable muff, and walking hastily up to her said—

"Now, what will you give me for the fine thing I have got in this muff?"

"Oh, my brooch!" said Mrs. Pemble.

"No! I'm sorry to say it's *not* your brooch. Well, as you won't guess, let you and May draw lots for it, and whoever gets it if they don't care about it shall give it up to the other. Take two spills, May, off of the mantel-piece; let Mrs. Pemble hold them, and whichever draws the longest shall have the fine thing that is in this muff."

"What a silly child you are, Linda," smiled May, handing the spills to Mrs. Pemble; "why can't you give it to whoever it belongs at once, without all this trouble?"

"*Rien sans peine ma belle*," laughed Linda, retreating with her muff while the lottery was drawing.

"May, you are the favourite of Fortune, for you have the longest spill."

"Well, whatever it is, I promise to share it with you if it is dividable," said May.

"Will you both make another promise?" laughed the giddy Linda.

"Not, at all events, till we hear what the promise is," said Mrs. Pemble.

"Why, that you will *both* kiss the person who sent it the first time you see them?"

"No, we will not promise *that*!" rejoined Mrs. Pemble, "having a wholesome fear of your *mauvaises plaisanteries*, Miss Linda; and it is just possible that the mighty treasure you have got there may be Mr. Twitcher's book, and I can answer for myself, and I think for May, not having the least fancy for kissing any man in or out of Paradise."

"Oh! then you mean to say that you don't care to have what I have got here?"

"Not knowing what it is, I can't say that I do; besides, the chances are against me, as May it was who drew the prize."

"Then allow me, Miss Egerton," said Linda, in an affected voice, advancing with a sort of *minuet pas*, and withdrawing from the muff, with a circular flourish of her hand, a ship letter, "to present you with this letter, as Mrs. Pemble does not care for it."

The letter was from Harcourt; "Balaklava" was on the post-mark.

"You silly child," said May, as with a tremulous motion she handed the letter to Mrs. Pemble, "you should have no frolics about these letters when you know how anxious Mrs. Pemble is for them."

"Oh, thank God!" exclaimed the latter, and eagerly broke the seal. It was a long and most cheerfully-written letter, but began and ended with a scolding to his mother for having sent him such a perfect Noah's ark of good things for both the outer and inner man, as he had just received by the "Thetis," Captain Sykes. Mrs. Pemble read the whole letter out, Linda sitting at her feet and looking up in her face to see as well as listen to every word,

while May hung over the back of her chair listening to it in perfect silence, and leaning her cheek upon her hand, her eyes following the words upon the paper as they were read out.

"Why, I never sent him anything!" said Mrs. Pemble, "it must be that dear, good Mr. Phippen; and it's now my turn to scold, and I will do so too by to-day's post, because I feel ashamed to be such a tax upon him as all that. I tell you what, May, we must work that dear, kind old man, a round-robin of a foot-muff and a pair of slippers for Christmas; and we have not more than three weeks to do them in."

"Never mind! I'll work all day and all night too at them," said Linda, jumping up and clapping her hands.

"And you'll help us, will you not, May, love?" said Mrs. Pemble, putting back her head to look up at her; but May was gone.

"I know why May went," said Linda; "she always thinks of everything, and I'm sure she thought you would like to have a good cry over that letter, without so many eyes staring at you; and I'm going too, as I promised to make some quince tea for Aunt Charity."

"No, darling, I'm not going to cry this time," said she, straining the affectionate little girl to her heart, and at the same time deluging her face with tears, "for I'm going down to speak to Sir Gregory, if he is alone and disengaged and will see me; so go and ask him, dear, if he will."

"Oh, dear, no! she's not going to cry," said Linda, holding up her finger archly; "nevertheless, I shall tell grandpapa to be sure and put up his umbrella, unless he wants to get as wet as I have done."

But when left alone she did *not* weep—she prayed, as those only *can* pray whose heavy load of fear and sorrow God has lifted with a mercy and a hope; and as she rose up, involuntarily, like to the solemn tones of an anthem, these beautiful lines vibrated through her memory:—

"Not at his grave, bereaved mother, weep;
He is not here!

First wipe away each tear,
And faith shall shew thy clearer eyes
A star to guide thee, where thy young son lies,
As watch'd by Heaven, and dear
As when thou smiledst on him in his sleep."

"Grandpapa is alone in the library, and will be very glad to see you; and he's so glad you have had another letter," said Linda, putting her head in at the door, and then running away as fast as she could, to answer in person one of Charley's oft-repeated "Here's me's, and where's oo's?"

"My dear, I'm very glad to hear you have got another letter,"

said Sir Gregory, holding out his hand to Mrs. Pemble, as she closed the library-door after her.

"And such a nice long one!" replied she, putting it into his hand, "written in the highest spirits; and that dear, good, old Mr. Phippen, that I have so often told you about, has been sending him all sorts of good things, and poor Harcourt thinks it was I who sent them, and so scolds his extravagant mother accordingly."

"Come, nothing can be better than that!" said he, as soon as he had read and returned her the letter. "What I like about that young fellow is, that he seems all rightly put together, for there is all the generous impetus and fire of youth about him, without any of its arrogance and self-sufficiency."

"Ah, my dear Sir Gregory! when God has given us but one tender plant to cultivate and to watch over, it would be indeed unpardonable if we let even one solitary weed choke up its healthy path; and I do not think, in His beautiful system of compensations, that He generally makes those children of sorrow—widowed mothers' only sons, who have 'BENONI' early written on their brow—also the Barnabas* of their ebbing years."

"As ye sow so shall ye reap;" and good mothers invariably plant good seed, and therefore, deserve a golden harvest," rejoined Sir Gregory.

"I tried to do so at least, as I always endeavoured to inculcate in the prosaic action of ordinary every-day life that golden rule from that exquisite little book of Gospel gems, of Joseph Snow's, entitled 'Churchyard Thoughts,' that—

None can be good too soon. Give life's young morn,
Thy best first fruits, to God, and not the lees;
The orient pearl, of morning dew is born:
Who would have manna at the dawn must seize.
Whene'er, whate'er the call, to live or die,
Say, with obedient Samuel, 'HERE AM I.'

But I must not go on talking of myself once removed in this way, as I came to speak to you about dear May; and I must again warn you, my dear Sir Gregory, that I think it very imprudent and unfair towards both of them, unless, indeed, you would like the match, that Mr. Lethbridge should incur all the proverbial perils of propinquity by being the preceptor of so beautiful and charming a girl as May, who tells me that he is now beginning to absent himself in a manner that he never did before, which convinces me that there is an honorable struggle going on in this young man's mind, and that he would not for the world either entrap her into a clandestine engagement or offer her the privations of a country curacy."

"I don't think so," said Sir Gregory; "I think Lethbridge

* Barnabas means "son of consolation."

merely absents himself because, thanks to that cantankerous, illiberal bigot, Jowl, he literally has a Pelion upon Ossa of business that he can scarcely make, much less find, time to get through. And my firm belief is, that he looks upon May as a perfect child; and one thought of love, with regard to her, has never crossed his brain, or entered his heart, beyond the love he feels in common for Linda and Charley. But were it otherwise, nothing would give me greater satisfaction, for I know not the man living that I have a higher esteem for, both morally and intellectually, than I have for Horace Lethbridge; and, even in a worldly point of view, his prospects are by no means despicable, as he is heir presumptive to a peerage, and from twenty to five-and-twenty thousand a year. And although his cousin, my Lord Aronby, will not do the least thing to interfere between him and starvation now, were starvation inclined to pay him a visit; yet as he is sixty-eight, and can neither live for ever, nor take his title and estates with him when he dies, nor keep Lethbridge out of them, I don't see, (considering the rare superiority of the man himself,) if I were to turn match-maker, (which Heaven forbid!) that I could do better for May. But if you think *she* likes him, *that* is another affair, for I would not for worlds let her incur the risk of making shipwreck of her affections upon one who did not, or could not return them; so, tell me, do you think *she* has any latent liking for him?"

"Well, really, that is what I *cannot* tell. I think May is much too high and too pure-minded to 'unsought be won;' and I have no means of even making a guess at the nature of her feelings on that subject, if, indeed, they are quite awakened, as I studiously avoid lowering their moral tone as women, and vulgarizing them as gentlewomen, by ever talking to them of lovers, flirtations, 'and getting married,' as the servant-maids phrase it; and as for a real and deep love, I think it too sacred and serious—not to say often too fatal and inevitable a crisis in a woman's existence—to touch upon the solemn mystery till nature and fate have taken the initiative in it."

"You are right, my dear Mary, and I know not which most to respect,—your real delicacy or your sound sense."

"Ah! my dear Sir Gregory," sighed she, "you know there is no experience so sound as that which has been dearly bought with personal sacrifice, but you have greatly relieved my mind by saying that nothing would give you greater satisfaction than that May *should* marry Mr. Lethbridge; but still—still—I cannot help feeling for poor Mr. Lethbridge, for I believe Adolphe Houdinot is right, when he says in his 'DIX ÉPINES POUR UNE FLEUR,'

QUE *La femme qui nous fuions, est celle que nous cherchons.*"

"*Peut-être?* but May is a child, and not a woman."

"Would she could always remain one," sighed Mrs. Pemble; "for, loved and cared for as she is, childhood is a Heaven."

"And don't you think she'll be always loved and cared for?"

"Loved in some way or other, I think she always will be. But love to a woman is a dark and a fearful thing. It seldom has the holiness of childhood's love, and never its watchfulness; the care that waits upon it being care indeed—cruel, ceaseless, sleepless, and heavy."

"No, no; not if it is for, and reciprocated by, a worthy object."

"Yes, even then; for it ever begins with a sunbeam and ends with a shadow, and both are branded with the doom of earth; for either through death or change the beam is sure to go, but the shadow ever hangs pall-like over the dead hopes it has left."

A visitor being announced, Mrs. Pemble withdrew to write her letters, and endeavour, as far as words could do so, to tell Mr. Phippen how much she felt his kindness to Harcourt, for she was convinced that none but him could have thought of cheering his weather-beaten tent with all the luxuries that had reached it, as one thing was very certain, that it was not any of his rich relations who had done it.

Having dined at five that day, at seven Miss Charity, Sir Gregory, Mrs. Pemble, and Linda repaired to the Baron's Court School-house; May, having a bad headache, had gone to bed. Upon arriving within a few yards of it, they found a difficulty in driving up to the door, and Sir Gregory, having put his head out of the window, said, "'Pon my word, I think Lumley must have transferred the Opera from the Haymarket, and come down here upon speculation, ladies! It's really worth your while to look out and see the positive crush of vehicles of every description, from Broughams and Clarences down to carts and tax-carts; and, as it is a lovely moonlight night as light as day, you will be able to see them."

"Bless me! what a crowd, to be sure! Where *can* all the people have come from?" said Miss Charity.

"From far and near, apparently," replied her brother; "but it's well to be a handsome young man, though only a country curate; but trust your English Misses and their Mammars for having scented out, within thirty miles round, that Lethbridge may one of these days be a peer, which is quite enough to make him peerless now, in their eyes."

"But, exclusive of that," said Mrs. Pemble, "Mr. Jowl is so exceedingly unpopular amongst all classes that I have no doubt they wish to give Mr. Lethbridge's meeting, by flocking to it in such crowds, the appearance of a perfect triumph."

"As, I have no doubt, it will be; for, besides that magnificent voice of his, he is an orator born,—eloquence in his every glance, and grace in his every gesture. And what a relief! after the vulgar intonation and unmodulated conventicle thunder of Mr. Jowl, with

his implacable feud against the poor letter H, and his verbal hospital of lame, halt and blind mispronunciations. And when he attempts to lighten on us from Mount Sinai, one would think he was gossiping about old houses,—as he calls Moses *Mosses*! And, as if all this were not enough," added Sir Gregory, "that loud and never-ending *a-hemming*! between every word makes one's ears ache and one's throat sore to hear him; and, as I always say, if his wife only *hems* half as much during the week as he does of a Sunday, she must be the most industrious woman in Europe."

Upon entering the School-room, the promise from without was amply fulfilled by the dense crowd within. Luckily the room was a very large one. The lower part of it was filled, not only by the children and their parents, but by all the other villagers, in their holiday clothes and the upper half with great numbers of the surrounding gentry, more especially ladies. Mr. Lethbridge had not yet ascended the reading-desk, but was standing at the corner of the first bench, which was just behind some half-dozen cabriole chairs covered in old red damask, which were ranged opposite the reading-desk for the Baron's Court family; and when they arrived he was talking to an elderly lady in black, and rather shabby black too, but she was, nevertheless, unmistakeably a gentlewoman, with a most benevolent countenance, and a low, quiet, sweet voice, and easy, gentle manners. Miss Kempenfelt was the first to shake hands with her, and then Sir Gregory held out both his to her, saying—

"Ah, my dear Mrs. Lewyn! I'm delighted to see you back again. When did you return?"

"Only at three o'clock to-day, but as soon as I heard of this meeting, I could not resist; so I put on my clogs, and here I am."

"You don't mean to say that you walked?—for, though it's fine over head, it's very damp under foot."

"Bah! you know, *que ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*; and if that held good with regard to St. Denis and his little stroll, with his head under his arm, I don't see why it should not do so equally with me, and my umbrella under mine," said the cheerful old lady.

While this dialogue was passing between her and Sir Gregory, Miss Charity had passed on to her seat, and Mr. Lethbridge was shaking hands with Linda, and asking why his pupil had not come. At first he did not seem to perceive Mrs. Pemble, but when he did so he bowed to her somewhat stiffly, or as she thought to the *governess*, and in spite of herself she felt annoyed, because, perhaps, that Mr. Lethbridge was not a person who left one the option or alternative of despising his opinion; but the next moment she acquitted him of superciliousness, much less of impertinence, as, offering his arm as timidly and respectfully as if she had been a queen, he said—

"Will you allow me to place you in a seat, where I think you

will be quite out of the draught?" and he led her to the very best seat of the six chairs.

"Thank you!" said she, taking his proffered arm; "but I hope it is a good place for hearing?"

A flush passed rapidly over his usually colourless cheeks as he said, with a laugh, "Unless one is sure that it is something worth hearing, I think it is anything but an advantage to be too near a speaker or a preacher."

"Fully concurring in that opinion," replied his companion, "I wish to-night to be as near the reading-desk as possible."

It is probable that he felt the compliment, as no man is insensible to one from a handsome and a clever woman; and indeed most men care little for the source from whence it comes, so long as the flattery only flows in freely. But whatever Mr. Lethbridge might have thought, he made no answer; and, after having advanced the chair to a more convenient position, he silently bowed and withdrew. And Sir Gregory having excavated Mrs. Lewyn from the back form where she had humbly seated herself, and placed her in a chair between his sister and himself, and the room being now *literally* as full as it could hold, so that, though not *much* thicker than the blade of a hatchet, Mr. Twitcher, who had only just arrived, found the greatest difficulty in wedging himself in at the very end of it among the parish children, who having, for the most part, bad colds, like "the perpetually-influenza'd Jane Collier," in Albert Smith's "Pottleton Legacy," he found himself like anything but "Man in Paradise!" Nor could he, from the sensible remarks of these admirably-trained children, even entertain the delusion of his being "Man in Parliament!" though, from the odorous fact of poor old Tamar Lloyd (by whom he was flanked on the east) always upon gala occasions indulging largely in peppermint lozenges, he *might* have fancied himself converted into Miss Charity's version of his "great work," and thought himself *literally* "Man in Petticoats and Man in Peppermint!" Everybody now being seated, or rather *wedged*, Mr. Lethbridge ascended the reading-desk. His lecturing, like his preaching, was always *extempore*. He began by thanking his friends for having rallied so numerous around him, and apologised for taking up so large a portion of their time, which doubtless might have been passed more agreeably elsewhere; but as he had been so ceaselessly accused by the rector of Baron's Court of holding out false lights to them, and *substituting* good works for faith, he owed it to those before him there assembled, more even than to himself, to most explicitly refute so false and totally unfounded a charge, and he hoped for ever to silence so unjust an accusation. "Not that I have not, my dear friends," continued he, "*individually* accepted the illiberal representations to which I have been subjected, and the many petty annoyances which have grown out of them, as a necessary portion of those distressing and mysterious temptations which the

inscrutable wisdom of the Creator metes out in a larger share to some than to others; and how far our *minds* may be bowed down under their weight, though our *faith* falter not, we cannot tell till the struggle of experience has taught us. But it is not with my own personal annoyances or trials that I mean to take up your time. I owe it to you as immortal souls, and to myself as a minister of Christ, and therefore a steward of those souls, to convince you that I have been, to the best of the faculties which God has lent me, a just, and not an *unjust*, steward—in a word, that I have *not* separated FAITH from WORKS; for, as I shall endeavour on this occasion to prove to you, *they cannot be separated*, as by faith we honor the Almighty, but by works we honor faith; *for by our works we alone can evidence our faith*. And let no one ever persuade you to the more than fallacy—the almost blasphemy—that God's power, God's mercy, or any other of the Divine attributes, are lessened by enforcing the *necessity* of good works. On the contrary, the imputing *all* to faith; and throwing aside all obligations to *practise*, reflects the highest *dishonor* upon the holiness of God. The man, indeed, who pretends to claim *salvation without* Christ is worse than an infidel; but he who asserts that works are *not* equally essential *with faith*, as the necessary result of it, let him call himself by what name he will, he is in reality nothing but a spiritual libertine. No man can claim a right to the immunities of Christianity *unless* he observes—that is, *unless he practises*—its *precepts*, by a true repentance of his former sins, and evidencing in *his works* the reformation of his life.

‘Measure thy life by *action*, not by space;
Nor sing the *requiem* to thy soul—‘content!’
The reckoning follows on the feast apace;
And when the day of vanity is spent,
Comes *Nature's* terror—judgment's awful night!—
Extinguishing at once *delight* and *light*.’

In short, live so as that having sympathy for your fellow-creatures, the angels may have sympathy with you, and that at the last the Saviour may not denounce the same repudiatory anathema upon your *fruitless faith* that He did upon the barren fig-tree, which, when He hungered, ministered not to his requirements; and those requirements are ever the same in the sorrowing flock He has left on earth. It is not enough to give to our fellow-sufferers the sterile compassion of words; neither are mere deeds, however serviceable and important to our welfare, sufficient, without they be hallowed with the kindness of a reciprocatory feeling. Of *this* Christ himself has left us a memorable, a mortal, and, at the same time, an immortal, example; for who amongst us can forget the touching incident recorded in the eleventh chapter and thirty-third verse of the Gospel of St. John, as having occurred at the grave of Lazarus?—When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and

the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled; and, it is added, '*Jesus wept!*' Here, then, we see tears—*human tears*—of the tenderest, softest, sweetest sympathy flowing from that Divine Source, the Saviour's eyes; and yet he came not to *bury*, but to raise Lazarus *from the dead*—to restore him to his sorrowing friends. Still he wept, because *they wept*; and, great as the boon was which He was about to bestow upon them, He still enhanced it, by feeling *with* them, as well as for them. His tears evinced His *faith* in their sorrow; His restoring Lazarus to them was the good work that evidenced that faith.

"But, looking at this question of works and faith merely in a worldly point of view, were our Church and our Legislature to cry down morality and set up FAITH, the mere empty *word*, in its stead, what would be the consequence? Why, rife as vice and crime unfortunately now are, still they *now* skulk through the bye-ways, blind alleys, and back stairs of our cities and villages; but we should *then* have a perfect saturnalia of every crime and every vice imaginable, not only making day hideous with their infamy, but driving their gilded chariots through all the thoroughfares of social life, with the armorial bearings of FAITH as their sole and all-sufficient warrant, without even that flimsy tribute to decency, the slight varnish of hypocrisy. When our Saviour was asked by the young man 'what he should do to inherit eternal life?' was the answer 'believe in me?' No! but 'Keep the commandments.' And what can be more applicable to the present subject than the words of St. James? 'What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man saith he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him alone?' Surely it is not necessary for me to add my feeble testimony to *this*, by reiterating how absolutely necessary good works are? The mere *faithites* may, indeed, ask 'How is this passage of St. James to be reconciled with that of St. Paul, that "we are justified by faith, and not by works?"' By comparing one thing with another, we shall easily reconcile the seeming contradiction. St. Paul was right, when reasoning with the intellectual heathen who set too high a value on his own acts and achievements; and though he does not give merit to men (nor do I), yet he nowhere says that *without* the performance of good works, salvation is to be secured. On the contrary, he confirms the necessity of our *doing* that which is good, by declaring that at the last day we shall be judged and rewarded *according to our works*; for the great Bible principle throughout is, that though we are *justified* by faith, we shall be *judged* by works. 'By faith we believe God to be merciful and just, but it is by good works that we show the sincerity of that faith.'

"The pardon granted to a criminal is an act of *mercy* on the part of the Sovereign; but yet, notwithstanding this pardon already obtained, it by no means privileges the criminal to commit

fresh crimes, or to *continue* in his old courses; otherwise he must and *will* eventually pay the forfeit of his own misdeeds. And so the King of kings has *once* mercifully commuted our just sentence of eternal punishment by the great Heavenly-given and Heaven-giving charter of the ATONEMENT. But, as long as we remain in the flesh, we are still in a penal settlement where *our own conduct* can alone reinstate us by making us ultimately worthy of the Divine Mercy; or cause us, notwithstanding this first great earnest of it, to irrevocably forfeit it. May none of us here present be in the latter fearful category! Therefore, I say to one and to *all*, old and young, rich and poor, highly endowed and meanly endowed, —*watch* as well as pray; and *act* so as to *prove* to your God, yourselves, and your fellow-creatures, that you do *both*. To *you*, children, I say love, honor, and obey your parents. To *you*, parents, watch over, bear with, and help your children. Neighbours and friends, to *you*, be unto each other *such*,—not only rendering one another every service in your power, but rendering them as kindly as you can, and, as far as in you lies, preventing and anticipating each other's wants. Wives, to *you* I say, study to make your husbands' homes happy and comfortable, so as to keep them out of the public-house, and with yourselves obey them in all things *reasonable*. *Mind*, I say, all things *reasonable*, and where no higher duty—that is, your duty towards GOD—intervenes to counter-order you; for you are their wives and helpmeets, not their bonded slaves; and the other day a wretched woman drowned her own child, of four years old, because the man, or rather the monster, who was about to become her husband, *ordered her to do so*. Husbands, who have at God's altar sworn to love, cherish, and with all your worldly goods endow your wives, forsaking all other women for their sakes, see that ye do so; for, believe me, though men have given themselves an unholy charter to break, at their will and pleasure, *this*, one of the most solemn of God's commandments, they will have to answer for it *as stringently*, if not more so, than women; inasmuch as that *they seek* their vices, whereas woman, the weaker sinner, is generally their ensnared victim. And remember that when, *then as now*, they were for stoning the woman taken in adultery, it was to the *men* that our LORD addressed himself, saying, 'Let him who is without sin cast the first stone!'—and you know the result, that not *one* was qualified to do so. And, further I tell you, that if you ill-use or even neglect your wives (and these two things are but greater and lesser degrees of the same sin), and that if you spend the week's earnings that should contribute to the support of your families, in lowering yourselves below the brutes, in a public-house of a Saturday night, and think to make it all right by appearing at church on Sunday morning, you are only guilty of an additional and a worse sin, that of hypocrisy. But if, under such circumstances, you presume to profane the most holy of God's ordinances

by communicating, I further tell you, that you are guilty of rank blasphemy; and did you present yourself at an altar where I officiated, I should think I was equally so if I administered the sacrament to you; and although your rector, whom it is your bounden duty to reverence and obey in all things, save (as I just now told your wives in reference to *their* duty to *you*) where a higher duty to God intervenes—but your rector, I was about to say, finds immense fault with the Sunday evening Cricket Club, which your excellent landlord, Sir Gregory Kempensfelt, has so kindly allowed me to establish on a part of his domain; and yet, my friends, as you are well aware, no man so misconducting himself on any day during the week, or month, or who has not twice on the Sabbath-day fulfilled his religious duties by attending church is allowed to participate in this healthy, manly, and, I must maintain, innocent recreation.

“But it is getting late, and, sincerely thanking you all for having listened to me so long and so patiently, I will only detain you further to tell you a story I once heard of a sailor, which, I think, is as good an illustration as any, of the utility of faith. A sailor was once going to Gravesend—it was in the days of the old-fashioned tilt boats—and, being exceedingly tipsy, the captain and all on board advised him to go below and tumble into his hammock, but neither fair words nor rough ones could prevail on him to do so; he continued to sing and swear, and his unaccountable speeches to the people passing in other vessels afforded high entertainment to every one on board. However, the boat had not got farther than the halfway house, when Jack, making a run towards the steerage, missed his footing and fell overboard. The boat immediately put about, and every assistance was given, and, what was still more fortunate, a wherry at the time was near at hand, whose crew made instantly for the spot; but poor Jack was for some time under water, and when he rose up, the first thing he espied was his hat, at which he immediately made a snatch, and, holding it above his head, kept swimming with his other hand till he was taken into the boat. When brought on board, he was speechless, and it was evident that he had swallowed a great quantity of water, which, by rolling him about the deck, he soon got rid of. His wet clothes were then taken off, and he was wrapped up in warm blankets and carried below, where he continued sleeping till they were within a mile of Gravesend. He then awoke, and turning to his comrades, who were sitting by him, his first words were neither thanks to God for his delivery, nor to his friends who had been the instruments of it, but they were ‘Halloo, my hearties! *didn’t I stick close to my hat to the last?*’ Now, Mr. Jowl is welcome to stick as close to his hat to the last as he pleases, and let others do all the working part necessary for salvation, but he will never compel me to take off mine, in order to bow to his opinion.”

As soon as the laugh that this anecdote had excited had ceased,

Mr. Lethbridge continued—"Yet still I tell you—nay, I implore you—to persist in good works to the uttermost of your respective means, power, and opportunity, for they shall 'bring you peace at the last.' I do not say they will exempt you from troubles and trials during your earthly pilgrimage, for we are oftener than not scourged for our good deeds by the very persons to whom we have rendered them, and we are expressly told that '*Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him from all; and many, very many, more are the troubles of the wicked, and whom can he trust to deliver him from them?*' In one that always fails his votaries at the last. But to those who trust in God, paying the amount of that trust *by obedience to His commandments*, a true faith ever whispers '*What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*' Therefore we should patiently await the unsealing of God's providences: '*he that believeth maketh not haste,*' that is, does not foolishly mistrust or impiously upbraid the Allwise Disposer of Events, but patiently committeth his *whole* being, with its every attendant circumstance, to His keeping, knowing that the issue of *all* things is in His hands. It may be that at this particular crisis, we are peculiarly tried: since war, with its gory tide, swollen by widows' and orphans' tears, is wailing through the land, and God forbid that human sorrows should ever be unaccompanied by human feelings! *Omnipotence strikes no blow that It does not intend we should feel.* Paul himself, eminent as he was for his piety and passiveness under the Divine Will, would have been deeply affected had his beloved Epaphroditus died; but '*God had mercy on him.*' May He also have mercy on those loved ones who are now '*sick unto death!*' But if His wisdom sees fit it should be otherwise, oh! ye who have not shrunk from giving a soldier to your country, do not shrink either from giving an angel to your God!—for, beyond all others, *you* should not mourn '*as those who have no hope.*' Weep—yes, weep—for your own lone hearts, bereaved and left, but weep *not* for *them*, who have made the

'————— blest exchange, to oversee
The barriers of a world of pain;
And, for a life they could not keep,
A life they cannot lose regain!'"

The sobs through the room were so audible and convulsive that again the orator had to pause for some seconds, and when he resumed, he said in conclusion, "And now, my dear friends, in taking leave of you—I more particularly address myself to you—my fellow workmen—the labouring classes of Baron's Court—think, and think daily and hourly, of the gratitude you owe to God for having cast your lots under the parental care of so kind, so generous, so considerate a landlord; though I feel that such an injunction is not only superfluous, but almost unkind, and that it

would be far more congenial to you were I to be the interpreter of your heartfelt love and gratitude to him, than take the unnecessary course of enjoining you to entertain them. But, my dear friends, what can I do? For though his worth is a theme which might make the least-gifted amongst us eloquent, yet his presence seals my lips. But this much for *your* satisfaction, as well as my *own*, I will say that if the fair catholic virtue of Charity, properly so called, ever found 'a local habitation,' it is in the person of Sir Gregory Kempenfelt. And of charity, I may say as Milton beautifully, but less truly, said of Eve—

'All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom, in discourse with her,
Loses discountenance and like folly shows:
Authority and reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally: and, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic placed.'

Having benefited so largely by the benign influence of that most apostolic charity *here*, oh! may we all meet with it again hereafter!—and when the archangel's trump shall sound, and the great records of Heaven be unclosed, may we still find ourselves *not* disunited, but for ever inscribed on the *same* illuminated page of the BOOK OF ETERNAL LIFE!"

The fervent and peculiarly harmonious tones of the speaker's voice ceased; but their echoes were vibrating through every heart, and the tears were still stealing down Mary Penrhyn's cheeks, but they were quiet and happy tears, when Sir Gregory said to her—

"Do you think we could squeeze Mrs. Lewyn in, as far as her own house? It's not more than a mile from this, and I don't like the idea of her walking home."

"She shall have my place, for nothing I should so much like as a walk home this beautiful night, and I am really panting for fresh air," said Mrs. Pemble.

"No, no!" Sir Gregory began to remonstrate, but she threaded her way through the crowd and had just reached the end of the room and was within three steps of the door, when Mr. Twitcher impeded her further progress by graciously remarking—

"An enviable voice—a—Lethbridge has, a—don't you think so?"

"Yes! his voice is beautifully modulated and very harmonious; and it would be a pity if it were less so, to express his ideas."

"Ideas! ah! yes!—a—I have put down one or two that I thought would tell in my 'Man in Paradise.'"

"It's a pity," groaned Mrs. Pemble inwardly, "that there is no one to put *you* down!" But, as self-preservation is the first law

of Nature—Heaven forgive her!—she had recourse to a subterfuge, and said, “I think, Mr. Twitcher, I see Miss Kempenfelt trying to catch your eye;” and, as Mr. Twitcher piqued himself upon having an intellectual love of supper, and thought that grouse and champagne *might* possibly be ‘looming’ in the distance, he broke from Mrs. Pemble, without even the ceremony of wishing her good night, and made two or three strides *à la* Mounster in Frankenstein towards Miss Charity, whereupon Mrs. Pemble instantly made her escape through the open door, and as soon as she could succeed in zig-zagging between the horses’ heads, she crossed the road and turned up a lane where the Lloyds lived, and which led by a bye way to Baron’s Court, for she seemed to want to be alone with the silent night, and to look up to the starry archives of Heaven for a continuation of all she had just been hearing; and as the fresh crisp air braced her languid nerves, and she gazed on all the glories above her, her eyes wandered from one star to another, and she wondered which, if any of them, Harcourt was looking at then; but ultimately she fixed them on the beautiful moon, as thinking *it* the surest *point de mire*; and then she thought of her lost picture, and experienced that cold, aching void which always succeeds the loss of even an inanimate thing that we much value, and which made her ask herself, with a shudder, what it would be if she lost the original; and she wished—oh! how she wished—he had gone into the Church, and thought how proud, how happy, how *safe* she should have felt had the young man she had just heard been *her* son; and if he had, would he not have reproved her for wishing to alter God’s decree? And then, as Mr. Lethbridge’s pale and delicate features rose up before her, and the deep legends of brighter worlds that seemed shrouded in his eyes, she also thought if he *were* her son, how anxious and fearful those pale looks and those unearthly eyes would make her, and she caught herself involuntarily repeating—

“Soldier of Christ! well proved and tried,
In every conflict brave and strong,
Though *death* and *grave* the spoil divide
Awhile, they shall not hold thee long.
Thy sleep is but the warrior’s rest!
Thee, wreath and palm and crown await;
And gratulating saints attest
Thy welcome at the immortal gate!”

“Eh! Taffy Lloyd, give it me, and I’ll open it, for you’re *stanning* in your own light, man!” and, roused by the old woman’s voice, Mary Penrhyn looked round, and saw Taffy and Tamar Lloyd bungling over the dissipations of a latch key; so she crossed over and offered her services.

“Thank you, ma’am; thank you, for me and for Taffy Lloyd. Eh, ma’am! but how beautiful young Mr. Lethbridge *du* put us to rights, to be sure! it *du du* a body good to hear him; ‘cause he

don't make un think as the devil ha' got so tight hold on un as there's no shaking on un off, as Mr Jowl *du*. My old man here *du* say he'd as lief hear Towzer, Squire Jones's bull-dog, bark any day, as hear Parson Jowl *prache*. And have you *heard*, ma'am, as poor Barbara Evans ha' lost a good place up there at the Vron, wi' that English lady, all along o' 'tending Mr. Jowl's church?"

"No! I have not heard anything about it; but is Mrs. Wilson not a Protestant then, that she should object to her servants attending Mr. Jowl's church?"

"Oh! it bain't that, ma'am; but on account of his congregation being such drunkards, and the wenches being no better nor they should be. So this *war* the way on it: the English lady, she says to Barbara Evans, says she, 'Oh! so you are one of Mr. Jowl's congregation?' 'Yes, ma'am,' says Barbara Evans. 'Oh! then,' says the lady, 'you won't do for me, for I understand all kinds of *'bominations* goes on among both men and women at his church.' 'Oh, dear no, ma'am!' says Barbara Evans, fool-like, dropping the lady a curtesy; 'if you please, ma'am, it's *after* we comes out of the church that the *'bominations begins!*'"

Mrs. Pemble could not help laughing very heartily at this illustration of the fruits of Mr. Jowl's doctrine, and more especially at the old woman's way of acting the scene; but, not to encourage scandal, after the exhortations to charity which they had just been hearing, she said—

"I hope your chinnery don't smoke now, Tamar, since Master Charles made you the box for it?"

"Oh! Lord love un, no! The place be as clear as a bell; and Taffy Lloyd and I *du* pray for un, sartin sure, night and day for it."

"In fact, then, I suppose Charley is your darling?"

"Oh! Lord bless hur! hur's everybody's darling, as hur grand-father was afore hur. I hope Miss May bain't ill, ma'am, that I didn't see her at the *meetin* this evening?"

"No! only a slight headache."

"What a beautiful girl hur *du* grow, to be sure! I don't think as ever any *quane* could come up to her for looks."

"She certainly is very beautiful—uniformly so, for her disposition is as lovely and as loveable as her face."

"Eh! and Miss Linda *du* come on bravely *tu*; but as for Master Charley, when he *du* come down the village *wi* Swiftpaws a-bounding *afore* him, and that ere big white cat upon his shoulder, he *du* look like a little King *wi* his *coort*, he *du*."

Mrs. Pemble could not help smiling at the old woman's idea of courtly pageants, and thought, though there are doubtless many old and not quite such spotless cats at every court, yet there were few such honest dogs at any, as Swiftpaws; but all she said, addressing herself to the old man, was—

"I suppose you have not heard anything of my poor brooch, Taffy?"

"No, ma'am; I'm sorry to say I ha'n't, and I've searched *fur* and near *tu* for it, and axed all the lads of the village to do the same, and I'm sure there hain't a rush most but what I've *shook't* well, thinking as it might have fallen among them along the river side, till my Missus, she laugh at me, and say, 'Why, Taffy Lloyd,' says she, 'you don't surely think as the young gentleman's *picter* will be found like Moses among the bulrushes? and I says, 'Who knows, 'Tamar Lloyd,' but when a thing is lost best ways is to look everywhere, for if looking *don't* find it, *not* looking *won't* *du* so; and it's not on 'count of the *ten-pun-noat*, ma'am, for I'd give not that, for I ha'n't a got it; but a matter o' *tu-pen* ten, as my old woman and I've a-got in the savings bank, as you had the likeness of the young gentleman safe back again."

"Thank you, Taffy, I'm sure you would," said Mrs. Pemble, slipping half-a-crown into the old man's hand; "and I'm *very* much obliged to you for the trouble you have already taken about it, and only hope *you* may be the finder of it. But I won't keep you standing any longer, so good night, good night, Tamar."

And she hurried on to make up for the time she had spent in talking to the old couple. Having turned down another lane to the right, that was within three of Baron's Court, she slackened her pace to take breath, when presently a man jumped out of, or rather over the hedge, alighting so close to her in the lane as almost to endanger her equilibrium: a circumstance, which—all "*strong-minded woman*" though she was—so alarmed her, that she uttered a faint scream.

"Good heavens! Mrs. Pemble; is it possible! *you* walking alone at this time of the night?" exclaimed Mr. Lethbridge, for he it was, and no robber or footpad, as with his extended arm he prevented her falling to the ground.

"Oh! how you startled me," said she at last, still trembling violently.

"For which, believe me, I could never forgive myself, had I done so intentionally. But who could have supposed you would be out alone at such an hour? And, pardon me for saying so, but it is worse than an imprudence, it is positively wrong, for you see what *might* have happened had it been one of those drunken fellows from the slate-quarry, for instance."

She explained the cause of her walking home.

"Even so," said he; "you had better have gone ten in a carriage than have run such a risk. Let me beg of you never to do so again?"

"I will not, certainly," she replied; "I have been too much frightened ever to repeat the experiment." And as she now tried to raise herself, he instantly withdrew his arm from round her waist, and offering it to her to lean upon, said—

"You had better also take my stick in your other hand, as that will be an additional support to you."

As she placed her arm within his she felt that it trembled slightly also, and that his heart beat violently.

"I fear I have also frightened you?" said she.

"You have indeed!" he replied.

"Then that is very ungrateful of me," she rejoined, "when I, when we all, have so much to thank you for, this evening."

"I think you had all very great patience to bear with my prosings so long; but truth is as slow to propound as to prove; and yet the fear of being thought a bore ought never to prevent our doing either."

"I don't think you run any risk of *that* sort. Yours are rather sins of omission, I take it; at least Miss Egerton complains of your remissness, and says you owe her a great many Hebrew lessons."

"That is a charge to which, I fear, I must plead guilty; but I'll try and make the *amende honorable* to-morrow, as Sir Gregory is good enough to give me a bed to-night."

"Oh! by the bye, I for one felt so grateful to you for what you said of him to-night."

"I never could say *half* as much as I think and know of the excellence of that man, especially in his presence. I never look at him but it seems to me—

'In every furrow years hath plough'd,
New and immortal hopes are sown;
And when the ripe ears time has bow'd,
Angels shall gather in their own.'"

"True; and yet such is human selfishness that one cannot help hoping that it may be long ere this angel-harvest be gathered in."

"Amen!" sighed his companion, "though he is just one of those who make one fully understand the full import of Solon's

'————— *dicique beatus*
Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet,'

we may feel *sure* that his happiness will then begin! But how many hearts his '*going before*' will leave void! and what a sad thing for those three dear children!"

"Do you not think May a lovely girl?" added Mrs. Pemble, thinking such a home-thrust *must* solve the problem she was so anxious to elucidate; but she was only doomed to be more mystified than ever, as he replied, with the most perfect composure,—

"Lovely indeed! I only fear she will make many Janiveres;—you remember old Janivere in Chaucer, who thought when he had his fair May, he would never go to heaven, he should live so merrily here on earth? 'Had I such a mistress,' he vows,

'I would not envy their prosperity—
The gods should envy *my* felicity.'"

And yet, in uttering this last couplet, he sighed profoundly; but

after that neither of them spoke, but walked on in silence till they reached Baron's Court.

"Strange!" thought she. "Is it love? or is it prudence? or both?—though they are seldom found together—or neither? And yet a deeper feeling seemed to tremble in his voice as he repeated those two lines. I wish, for May's sake, for his own, that he knew what Sir Gregory said this morning. What a pity it is that there should be things it would make people so very happy to know, and yet which would be so very wrong to tell them." And involuntarily she sighed also.

"I hope," said Mr. Lethbridge, "you have not taken cold by this imprudent walk, after being in that suffocatingly hot room?"

"No," said she laughing, as she rang the deep-toned door bell, "I have taken nothing but your stick, which, it seems, I was going to take possession of; but I now return it to you, with many thanks, for I believe '*strong minded-women*' have not yet arrived at walking-sticks, though they often lean upon what is not half so much to be depended on." And so saying, she returned him his ebony cane, which he received with a silent bow, just as the door was opened.

"Are Miss Kempenfelt and Sir Gregory returned yet?"

"Yes, Ma'am," said Gifford; "and Sir Gregory was much alarmed to find you were not yet home. He and Miss Kempenfelt are in the dining-room waiting supper."

"Did Edward Parry bring anything for me, Gifford?" asked Mr. Lethbridge.

"Yes, Sir, a carpet bag and a dressing box; they are up in your room."

"Oh! thank you."

And as Gifford threw open the dining-room door, Sir Gregory, who was walking up and down, turned hastily round and said—

"My dear Mrs. Pemble! I am really very angry with you. How could you break away as you did, and think of walking home at this time of night?"

"Ah! I am very glad to find that you are of my way of thinking upon that subject, Sir Gregory," chimed in Mr. Lethbridge.

"I tell you what, my good fellow," said Sir Gregory, turning upon him, and taking him by both the lappels of his coat, "*you* need not interfere, for I have an account to settle with *you* also, as I give you fair notice, that you and I shall quarrel if you take to flattering and flummerizing me in public."

"And when I *do*, so we may; but it is my duty, as a clergyman, to hold out proper examples to others, you know, whenever and wherever I can find them."

"There's a pretty sort of fellow for you!" smiled Sir Gregory, aiming at him a pantomimic box on the ear, "to make an example of his friends."

"You did not bring Mr. Twitcher back to supper, then?—that

was very cruel of you, Miss Kempenfelt," said Mrs. Pemble close in Miss Charity's ear, so that she could not fail to hear.

"I!" laughed she, "I thought he might go and sup with his 'Man in Paradise,' or with Duke Humphrey, and not bore us, for I think he's a mighty conceited, foolish sort of person."

"I'm sure, Miss Kempenfelt, no one here will be so rude as to differ from you," said Mr. Lethbridge.

"I wonder," said Sir Gregory, as they seated themselves at table, "what the origin of that saying was, of dining with Duke Humphrey being equivalent to having no dinner. I dare say Mrs. Pemble can tell us."

"I have heard," said she, "that it arose long ago, from some Westminster boys who were playing in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, where Duke Humphrey lies buried; and having been repeatedly intreated by the verger, but in vain, to come out, as he was going to lock-up, he at length locked the door upon them, saying, 'Young gentlemen, a good appetite to ye; I leave you to dine with Duke Humphrey.'"

"Ah! very likely; no doubt that is the origin of it, as I never heard that poor Duke Humphrey *de son vivant* was famed for any parsimonious want of hospitality."

And then Sir Gregory, having renewed his lecture about her walking alone at so late an hour, she told how she had delayed speaking to the Lloyds, and how much she had been frightened by the sudden apparition of Mr. Lethbridge.

"And you may thank your stars that you were more frightened than hurt," said Sir Gregory, "for how should you have liked it to have been a foot-pad who had jumped out of the hedge and put a pistol to your head?—for though those fascinating scoundrels, Barrington and Maclean, are no more, and highways are now railways, yet we *do* hear of such amiable little civilities occasionally, even in our days."

This subject exhausted, the conversation became general; and even Miss Charity was in singular good humour, as, indeed, she always was when Mr. Lethbridge was there, whom she designated as "a mighty sensible young man," so that altogether "the rounded hours rolled swiftly on," till they were surprised when the clock struck twelve, they lit their bed-room candles and went up the great staircase together.

"We need not," said Sir Gregory, stopping at the first landing, where the two galleries branched off, "be like the Chinese, and pass the night in re-seeing each other home; so I vote that we are all dropped at our respective doors as they come; therefore, being at *mine*, I wish you all a very good night! Lethbridge, I suppose you know your room, though you now occupy it so seldom?"

"Good night!"

"Good night!"

And, as Miss Kempenfelt's room was next to her brother's, the band was now reduced to two; and as they entered the opposite gallery,

"Allow me," said Mr. Lethbridge, "to relieve you of some of those things." And he took Mrs. Pemble's shawl and boa from her, which, indeed, for the little way they had to go, was scarcely worth while, so soon were the last two "good nights" followed by a third; but to this one, as he shook hands with her, was added a "God bless you."

As we must now absent ourselves from Baron's Court for some little time on "urgent private affairs," and must then go and see what Mr. Phippen is about, as well as Mary Penrhyn's great relations, we may here mention that the latter *did* recover her son's picture, but not till Christmas morning, when May and Linda knocked at her door while she was dressing, and presented her with the long-lost brooch,—not in its original plain, massive gold setting, but encircled with a wreath of laurel in emeralds and brilliants, which was their Christmas-box; "For," said Linda, "after the Alma and his heroic conduct there, grandpapa said your son deserved a laurel wreath, and so May and I determined he *should* have one, and *we* were the thieves!"

"My dear children! I fully appreciate your kindness and generosity, and, above all, your compliment to Harcourt; but indeed," added she embracing them, "I am grieved you should have given me so costly a proof of your affection, which is of more value to me than these brilliants and emeralds; and I fear," continued she, as the tears fell upon her regained treasure, "that you will think me very ungrateful, when I tell you that I am grieved, nay, almost annoyed, that this picture should have been in a jeweller's hand so long, for it seems to me a sort of profanation."

"Well," laughed Linda, throwing her arms round her neck, and whispering her, "you need not fret about *that*, for I can tell you *only* the setting went to London, as a pattern for the size; the picture May kept safely locked up the whole time."

CHAPTER XIV.

SUBSTANCE AND SHADOW; SHOWING THAT ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS.

THE season was what we traditionally call "the merry month of May," the time noon, the *locale* Threadneedle Street, when an exceedingly *voyante* and vulgarly, because glaringly appointed

yellow (not orange) chariot, only redeemed by the goodness of the horses, which were large, thorough-bred, and high-stepping greys, stopped at an office door, the windows of which were secured with a thick cross-barred grating, like those of a prison, while on the thickly-nailed and iron-clamped black door appeared on a bronze plate, in raised brass letters above the letter-box, the name of

“MR. PHIPPEN.”

The footmen, or “flunkies,” as the maid-of-all-work-ocracy would term them, matched well with the horses, but appeared themselves to suffer from the vulgarizing influences of the apoplectic exuberance of gold lace with which their hats were encumbered; *à tout malheur quelque chose est bon*, says the proverb, and though it is no longer a misfortune to be cellar or garret born in these enlightened days, when, on the contrary, to be the *reverse* is the drawback, yet among the many *other* advantages which *parvenus* possess is that of paying their way through the Herald's Office, and therefore choosing their armorial bearings, instead of being hampered with heir-loom griffins and gules, or hereditary angels, antelopes, mermaids, and caps of maintenance; and consequently the arms upon the yellow chariot in question, being all duly paid for, had so many quarterings (!) that they looked like *coupons*, or heraldic shares, in half the pedigrees of England; and the supporters, being a lion and a leopard, gave them at a short distance quite a *faux air* of the Royal arms, while the motto, which meandered under the paws of the formidable quadrupeds, was the very appropriate one of

“*Porro unum est necessarium*”—
(Moreover, one thing is needful;)

and having, or having had, *the* one thing needful for shining in English society, Sir Titaniferous Thompson, to whom this turn-out belonged, had with great unction adopted that motto.

No sooner had the coachman pulled his high-mettled cattle sharply up against the kerb-stone of Philip Phippen's office, and the twin giants in plush had lowered the steps, than the “*Honorable Baronet*” hastily searched all the pockets of the carriage for a memorandum-book, which having found, he began with his pencil to rapidly add up certain figures; so that, previous to entering the office, he had the full benefit for a few seconds of having his cheeks fanned by the “May-kissed breezes,” as they came somewhat dingily filtered through the volcanic chimneys of the surrounding buildings, whose craters, more indefatigable than those of Etna and Vesuvius, were always smoking. As soon, however, as he had finished his calculations, and arrived at what the late Joseph Hume was wont to call “*the tottlet of the hol*,” he pushed a japanned tin box at the bottom of the carriage with his foot, and telling one of the servants to bring it into the office, he then alighted,—not with the commercial hurry of a man of business,

but with the measured pace befitting a British Senator, an East India Director, a brand-new Baronet, a son-in-law to a Peer, and more especially, as the cause of all these glorious effects, a *millionnaire*, who felt he had the world to trample on.

As the great man traversed the short passage that led to Mr. Phippen's office, he found it somewhat cumbered with packing-cases of divers sizes and forms; and as *chassez la naturel il revient au gallop*, although Lady Georgiana had been indefatigable in drilling her lord and master into the *external* decorums of good society, still, that most vulgar and low-bred of all minor vices, a prying curiosity into other persons' parcels, letters, and affairs, raged as paramount in the *great man's* mind as it had done erst of old in Manchester, when he, as a boy, had established himself into the *quid-nunc* of the village, as a sort of social "funds" upon which to trade; so, unfolding his double gold eye-glass, he stooped down and read the direction on one of the boxes, which appeared like a grocer's deal case, about three feet long, which direction was—

"MRS. THOMPSON. To be forwarded."

In spite of himself, in spite, too, of the gold with which his superfine cloth garments were now lined, and in spite of the golden medium through which he had read this address, an unpleasant—a *very* unpleasant—sensation ran, like a gymnastic cramp, through the left side of Anne Thompson's son, and one or two large drops stood suddenly out upon his forehead, like the first damp phase of verdigris on copper; but, hastily brushing them away with his handkerchief, he said, almost out loud—"Poooh!" as he remembered that Thompson and Smith, like man and woman, were almost generic terms; and, as a conscience "quieter," the honorable baronet found this reflection very successful!

"Ah! good morning, Mr. Phippen," said he, in his most condescending voice, as he entered the office of the latter.

"Good morning, Sir Titaniferous," responded Mr. Phippen, without rising from his chair, or even raising his eyes from a paper on which he was writing, but merely putting up the fore-finger of his left hand, as much as to say, "Wait a moment, and then I'll speak to you." And having appended his signature to the document which he was writing, he handed it to a clerk who was waiting to receive it, merely saying—

"Two copies of this, Sedgemore. And here," added he, taking out a pocket-book, and putting a bank-note and a slip of paper into the clerk's hand, "after you have run off those two copies, just step into the Bank and get me two bank-post-bills in that name, for £42 3s. 8d. and £29 1s. 1d., and you need not bring them to me till I ring. Now, Sir Titaniferous, I'm at your service;" and Mr. Phippen backed his chair and crossed his legs, like a man perfectly at his ease and by no means awed by the greatness before him; on the contrary, though always small

in stature and wizen in face, the baronet appeared to be visibly shrinking as he drew up his forces—to wit, his tin box and himself—opposite the portly stockbroker; and, nervously feeling for a black elastic chain round his neck, to which was appended a gold Bramah key, he opened it, or rather unlocked it, as he still kept the lid down by leaning on it, as he said—

“That you may have ample security for the additional £40,000 that I *must* have by Thursday, I have brought you several mortgages and different scrip to take your choice from.”

“I must beg of you, once for all, to understand *litera scripta*, Sir Titaniferous, that with *scrip* I will have nothing to do, as I do not consider it any more security than I should the buttons on your servants’ liveries.”

“Well, well, my dear Sir, there is no harm done. I merely offered them in the light of *additional* security—and—and here are my Crystal Palace shares, and those in Covent Garden Theatre, and in her Majesty’s Theatre.”

“Very sorry,” replied Mr. Phippen, phlegmatically flipping, somewhat brusquely, the tassel of his right Hessian, as it lay unconsciously reposing, crossed over his left knee; “but Theatres may be burnt down, ditto Crystal Palaces.”

“Come, come, my dear Sir, so may private country houses too, for that matter.”

“Aye! but they are generally insured to their full amount, more especially if mortgaged; besides, the acres belonging to them remain.”

And as he uttered this oracular fiat, Mr. Phippen abstracted from his hind-pocket one of Mrs. Pemble’s pocket-handkerchiefs, and blew his nose so energetically that it might have been heard like a tocsin half way up Threadneedle-street, and mistaken on ‘Change for the announcement of another victory; and indeed so it was, inasmuch as, to judge by the shrug of Sir Titaniferous’s shoulders, and the sigh with which he again opened the tin box, and took from it another packet of red-tape-tied papers and handed them to his companion, it appeared very like a defeat for him. Mr. Phippen first muttered their engrossed endorsements half audibly, and then, unfolding the foolscap sheets, cast his eyes rapidly over the inventory of the “lands, messuages, and tenements” therein specified, and, making a little memorandum on the blotting-paper before him, laid the deed of mortgage down beside him, saying—

“Very well as far as it goes; but not above £9000 or £10,000 *bond fide* security; and that’s a long way off £150,000.”

“But—but”—hesitated Sir Titaniferous, “I thought to oblige me you would, *perhaps*, take only for a *month*, till the meeting of the partners of Dobbs, Thompson, and Dobbs’ Bank has taken place, the scrip—I mean the shares in Covent Garden and Her Majesty’s Theatre as *temporary* security.”

“I am quite willing, Sir Titaniferous, to let you have the plea-

"I suppose you have not heard anything of my poor brooch, Taffy?"

"No, ma'am; I'm sorry to say I ha'n't, and I've searched *fur* and near *tu* for it, and axed all the lads of the village to do the same, and I'm sure there hain't a rush most but what I've *shook't* well, thinking as it might have fallen among them along the river side, till my Missus, she laugh at me, and say, 'Why, Taffy Lloyd,' says she, 'you don't surely think as the young gentleman's *pictur* will be found like Moses among the bulrushes? and I says, 'Who knows, 'Tamar Lloyd,' but when a thing is lost best ways is to look everywhere, for if looking *don't* find it, *not* looking *won't du* so; and it's not on 'count of the *ten-pun-noat*, ma'am, for I'd give not that, for I ha'n't a got it; but a matter o' *tu-pen ten*, as my old woman and I've a-got in the savings bank, as you had the likeness of the young gentleman safe back again."

"Thank you, Taffy, I'm sure you would," said Mrs. Pemble, slipping half-a-crown into the old man's hand; "and I'm *very* much obliged to you for the trouble you have already taken about it, and only hope *you* may be the finder of it. But I won't keep you standing any longer, so good night, good night, Tamar."

And she hurried on to make up for the time she had spent in talking to the old couple. Having turned down another lane to the right, that was within three of Baron's Court, she slackened her pace to take breath, when presently a man jumped out of, or rather over the hedge, alighting so close to her in the lane as almost to endanger her equilibrium: a circumstance, which—all "*strong-minded woman*" though she was—so alarmed her, that she uttered a faint scream.

"Good heavens! Mrs. Pemble; is it possible! *you* walking alone at this time of the night?" exclaimed Mr. Lethbridge, for he it was, and no robber or footpad, as with his extended arm he prevented her falling to the ground.

"Oh! how you startled me," said she at last, still trembling violently.

"For which, believe me, I could never forgive myself, had I done so intentionally. But who could have supposed you would be out alone at such an hour? And, pardon me for saying so, but it is worse than an imprudence, it is positively wrong, for you see what *might* have happened had it been one of those drunken fellows from the slate-quarry, for instance."

She explained the cause of her walking home.

"Even so," said he; "you had better have gone ten in a carriage than have run such a risk. Let me beg of you never to do so again?"

"I will not, certainly," she replied; "I have been too much frightened ever to repeat the experiment." And as she now tried to raise herself, he instantly withdrew his arm from round her waist, and offering it to her to lean upon, said—

"You had better also take my stick in your other hand, as that will be an additional support to you."

As she placed her arm within his she felt that it trembled slightly also, and that his heart beat violently.

"I fear I have also frightened you?" said she.

"You have indeed!" he replied.

"Then that is very ungrateful of me," she rejoined, "when I, when we all, have so much to thank you for, this evening."

"I think you had all very great patience to bear with my prosings so long; but truth is as slow to propound as to prove; and yet the fear of being thought a bore ought never to prevent our doing either."

"I don't think you run any risk of *that* sort. *Yours* are rather sins of omission, I take it; at least Miss Egerton complains of your remissness, and says you owe her a great many Hebrew lessons."

"That is a charge to which, I fear, I must plead guilty; but I'll try and make the *amende honorable* to-morrow, as Sir Gregory is good enough to give me a bed to-night."

"Oh! by the bye, I for one felt so grateful to you for what you said of him to-night."

"I never could say *half* as much as I think and know of the excellence of that man, especially in his presence. I never look at him but it seems to me—

'In every furrow years hath plough'd,
New and immortal hopes are sown;
And when the ripe ears time has bow'd,
Angels shall gather in their own.'"

"True; and yet such is human selfishness that one cannot help hoping that it may be long ere this angel-harvest be gathered in."

"Amen!" sighed his companion, "though he is just one of those who make one fully understand the full import of Solon's

'————— dicique beatus
Ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet,'

we may feel *sure* that his happiness will then begin! But how many hearts his '*going before*' will leave void! and what a sad thing for those three dear children!"

"Do you not think May a lovely girl?" added Mrs. Pemble, thinking such a home-thrust *must* solve the problem she was so anxious to elucidate; but she was only doomed to be more mystified than ever, as he replied, with the most perfect composure.—

"Lovely indeed! I only fear she will make many Janiveres;—you remember old Janivere in Chaucer, who thought when he had his fair May, he would never go to heaven, he should live so merrily here on earth? 'Had I such a mistress,' he vows,

'I would not envy their prosperity—
The gods should envy *my* felicity.'"

And yet, in uttering this last couplet, he sighed profoundly; but

after that neither of them spoke, but walked on in silence till they reached Baron's Court.

"Strange!" thought she. "Is it love? or is it prudence? or both?—though they are seldom found together—or neither? And yet a deeper feeling seemed to tremble in his voice as he repeated those two lines. I wish, for May's sake, for his own, that he knew what Sir Gregory said this morning. What a pity it is that there should be things it would make people so very happy to know, and yet which would be so very wrong to tell them." And involuntarily she sighed also.

"I hope," said Mr. Lethbridge, "you have not taken cold by this imprudent walk, after being in that suffocatingly hot room?"

"No," said she laughing, as she rang the deep-toned door bell, "I have taken nothing but your stick, which, it seems, I was going to take possession of; but I now return it to you, with many thanks, for I believe '*strong minded-women*' have not yet arrived at walking-sticks, though they often lean upon what is not half so much to be depended on." And so saying, she returned him his ebony cane, which he received with a silent bow, just as the door was opened.

"Are Miss Kempenfelt and Sir Gregory returned yet?"

"Yes, Ma'am," said Gifford; "and Sir Gregory was much alarmed to find you were not yet home. He and Miss Kempenfelt are in the dining-room waiting supper.

"Did Edward Parry bring anything for me, Gifford?" asked Mr. Lethbridge.

"Yes, Sir, a carpet bag and a dressing box; they are up in your room."

"Oh! thank you."

And as Gifford threw open the dining-room door, Sir Gregory, who was walking up and down, turned hastily round and said—

"My dear Mrs. Pemble! I am really very angry with you. How could you break away as you did, and think of walking home at this time of night?"

"Ah! I am very glad to find that you are of my way of thinking upon that subject, Sir Gregory," chimed in Mr. Lethbridge.

"I tell you what, my good fellow," said Sir Gregory, turning upon him, and taking him by both the lappels of his coat, "*you* need not interfere, for I have an account to settle with *you* also, as I give you fair notice, that you and I shall quarrel if you take to flattering and flummerizing me in public."

"And when I *do*, so we may; but it is my duty, as a clergyman, to hold out proper examples to others, you know, whenever and wherever I can find them."

"There's a pretty sort of fellow for you!" smiled Sir Gregory, aiming at him a pantomimic box on the ear, "to make an example of his friends."

"You did not bring Mr. Twitcher back to supper, then?—that

was very cruel of you, Miss Kempenfelt," said Mrs. Pemble close in Miss Charity's ear, so that she could not fail to hear.

"I!" laughed she, "I thought he might go and sup with his 'Man in Paradise,' or with Duke Humphrey, and not bore us, for I think he's a mighty conceited, foolish sort of person."

"I'm sure, Miss Kempenfelt, no one here will be so rude as to differ from you," said Mr. Lethbridge.

"I wonder," said Sir Gregory, as they seated themselves at table, "what the origin of that saying was, of dining with Duke Humphrey being equivalent to having no dinner. I dare say Mrs. Pemble can tell us."

"I have heard," said she, "that it arose long ago, from some Westminster boys who were playing in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, where Duke Humphrey lies buried; and having been repeatedly intreated by the verger, but in vain, to come out, as he was going to lock-up, he at length locked the door upon them, saying, 'Young gentlemen a good appetite to ye; I leave you to dine with Duke Humphrey.'"

"Ah! very likely; no doubt that is the origin of it, as I never heard that poor Duke Humphrey *de son vivant* was famed for any parsimonious want of hospitality."

And then Sir Gregory, having renewed his lecture about her walking alone at so late an hour, she told how she had delayed speaking to the Lloyds, and how much she had been frightened by the sudden apparition of Mr. Lethbridge.

"And you may thank your stars that you were more frightened than hurt," said Sir Gregory, "for how should you have liked it to have been a foot-pad who had jumped out of the hedge and put a pistol to your head?—for though those fascinating scoundrels, Barrington and Maclean, are no more, and highways are now railways, yet we *do* hear of such amiable little civilities occasionally, even in our days."

This subject exhausted, the conversation became general; and even Miss Charity was in singular good humour, as, indeed, she always was when Mr. Lethbridge was there, whom she designated as "a *mighty* sensible young man," so that altogether "the rounded hours rolled swiftly on," till they were surprised when the clock struck twelve, they lit their bed-room candles and went up the great staircase together.

"We need not," said Sir Gregory, stopping at the first landing, where the two galleries branched off, "be like the Chinese, and pass the night in re-seeing each other home; so I vote that we are all dropped at our respective doors as they come; therefore, being at *mine*, I wish you all a very good night! Lethbridge, I suppose you know your room, though you now occupy it so seldom?"

"Good night!"

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And as he uttered this oracular fiat, Mr. Phippen abstracted from his hind-pocket one of Mrs. Pemble’s pocket-handkerchiefs, and blew his nose so energetically that it might have been heard like a tocsin half way up Threadneedle-street, and mistaken on ‘Change for the announcement of another victory; and indeed so it was, inasmuch as, to judge by the shrug of Sir Titaniferous’s shoulders, and the sigh with which he again opened the tin box, and took from it another packet of red-tape-tied papers and handed them to his companion, it appeared very like a defeat for him. Mr. Phippen first muttered their engrossed endorsements half audibly, and then, unfolding the foolscap sheets, cast his eyes rapidly over the inventory of the “lands, messuages, and tenements” therein specified, and, making a little memorandum on the blotting-paper before him, laid the deed of mortgage down beside him, saying—

“Very well as far as it goes; but not above £9000 or £10,000 *bonâ fide* security; and that’s a long way off £150,000.”

“But—but”—hesitated Sir Titaniferous, “I thought to oblige me you would, *perhaps*, take only for a *month*, till the meeting of the partners of Dobbs, Thompson, and Dobbs’ Bank has taken place, the scrip—I mean the shares in Covent Garden and Her Majesty’s Theatre as *temporary* security.”

“I am quite willing, Sir Titaniferous, to let you have the plea-

sure, if it is one, of passing temporarily for *the* richest man in the City after the Rothschilds, as *there* you must always have the pawnbroker's odds of two to one against you. I am quite willing also to let it be *supposed* that you could buy up Threadneedle-street, including the humble individual who has now the honor of addressing you; but the sooner you disabuse your mind as to your also having the power of *selling* the latter, the better. And as I have already a balance of £110,000 against you, I cannot advance £40,000 more without *tangible*, not temporary security; and, moreover as I am not a sharper, I should be very sorry to contribute towards defrauding any one by accepting a lien on Dobbs, Thompson, and Dobbs' Bank; and as he spoke he fixed his brown eyes full on his auditor.

"Sir!—Mr. Phippen!—really, Sir—you—you—abuse the advantage you have in our relative positions of debtor and creditor; and—and—allow me to say, Sir, that, in short, I—I do not understand what you mean;" and the coppery complexion of the M.P. assumed a paler and more brassy hue.

"My meanings I never find any difficulty in explaining, Sir Titaniferous Thompson. I'll be very candid with you. The plain English of the matter is this, I do *not* consider Dobbs, Thompson, and Dobbs' Bank solvent."

"My dear Sir, what an idea!" shrugged the sleeping partner of that bank, with that inimitable and indescribable expression of countenance which may be compared to *looking a whistle*, which non-plussed legislators and critics resort to when some "damning proof" is brought home to them, that, being perfectly unable to refute, they affect to treat with pitying contempt. "What an idea!" reiterated the baronet.

"I hope it may be *only* an idea; but, as it is *mine*, I cannot consent to part with it except, like my money, on good security."

"Well," said Sir Titaniferous, again leading the forlorn hope of another dive into the tin box, "here is a mortgage I would rather *not* give out of my own possession, for, being a Lancashire man, I have a sort of feeling for the people, and should be sorry it was foreclosed."

"Sillwood and Adams!" read Mr. Phippen, and then, passing his hand tightly over his eyes, he added, "why, are they not mill-owners at Manchester?"

"They *were*, but the old people having had the misfortune to make a fortune, the sons of the partners bought an estate between them, and called it Xylon Park, *xylon* being the botanical name for the cotton cone; however, the turf and other matters soon encumbered it."

"And *this* also was swooped into your net?" said Mr. Phippen; and again his eyes were fixed so keenly on his companion's face, that they appeared to be dissecting it, and the other winced accordingly,

"Honorably, quite honorably, I assure you," stammered he.

"Of course! Who ever became *possessed* of an estate that it was *not* honorably? *Losing* one is another affair." And this deed Mr. Phippen also accepted, and put aside as he spoke, adding—

"Come, we are getting on; we only want £80,000 more."

"You really are too hard upon me."

"My dear Sir Titaniferous! money is a very hard and hardening thing, and that is, no doubt, the reason why it is called *hard cash*; but that tin box you have there looks as if it contained a great deal more than £80,000."

"Well, perhaps it does; and therefore surely you might trust me till next week, only till next week?"

"Trust in any one or any thing beyond the Bank of England and the three per cents., is a weakness, as *you ought* to know, which *we* monied men are never guilty of, Sir Titaniferous."

"Here, then; I suppose you must have them," said the latter, with a groan, as he handed him two more deeds out of the box, one of which Mr. Phippen appeared to read the endorsement of very attentively.

"Surely you don't object to *that*?" inquired the borrower, nervously.

"No, no! that will do very well!" And tightly tying all these mortgages together, Mr. Phippen rose, unlocked a large iron safe, with its four or five ponderous locks, threw them into a pigeon-hole, and, re-locking the safe and consigning the key to his pocket, said—

"Now I'll write you a cheque for the money!" which, having done, and handed it to the baronet, the broker evidently thought their business, for that day at least, was at an end; but Sir Titaniferous, in transferring the cheque to his pocket-book, said, in his most affable and electioneering manner—

"When *will* you come and dine with me?"

"You really wish it?"

"My dear Sir! *can* you doubt it?"

"Well, you've asked me so often that, egad! I'll dine with you to-morrow."

Now it so happened that although Mr. Phippen was as innocent as the child unborn of either "Court Journal" or "Morning Post," his clerk, Mr. Montague Sedgemore, was much addicted to them, as he used to talk both with considerable effect at Rosherville, Laurent's Casino and Cremorne, where, by glibly letting out the whole peamage upon them, the young ladies became over head and ears, and the rival "*gents*" completely swamped; and Mr. Phippen having seen in the "Morning Post" that day (which, thinking it was "The Times" he had taken off of Mr. Sedgemore's desk) that "Sir Titaniferous and Lady Georgiana Thompson were to entertain their Royal Highnesses the Duchess of — and Princess —, of —," at dinner on the following one, he most cruelly, and with

"malice aforethought," invited himself to join that "distinguished party;" and seeing, not to say chuckling, at the *coup de foudre* manner in which Sir Titaniferous was taken a-back by his kind proposition, he added to his perplexity by affecting to mistake the cause of it, and said—

"Oh! don't suppose I shall disgrace you. I've got a dress waistcoat—black satin, all worked with flowers—'pon my life! a very tasty thing. And not these boots, but French-polished ones, and trousers, and white gloves. I know all about it."

"My dear Sir, we shall, at all times, be most *de-lighted* to see you; but to-morrow, I almost fear we shall not have room for you, and—and—"

"Oh!" broke in Mr. Phippen, "put *me* anywhere, at the side-table if *you* like; only egad! I can't play the French-horn as 'Squire Thornhill did; but for playing second fiddle, *that* I don't mind in the least. Indeed, you may tell the company, if you like, that I'm a professor of the second fiddle. You know all the performers are professors now-a-days; and 'egad! I only wish that it was t'other way too, and that all professors were performers."

"No, no, my dear Sir," remonstrated Sir Titaniferous, making another expiring effort, without, however, like the dolphin under similar circumstances, assuming any beautiful colours, "not to-morrow, as I want Lady Georgiana to have the pleasure of first making your acquaintance *en petit comité*; and then we will make a party on purpose for you of agreeable people, that I think you will like."

"Couldn't have a party I like better. I think I saw in the paper that the Duchess of ——— and Princess of ——— dine with you."

"Why," gasped the tortured *parvenu*, in almost a state of collapse, "do—do—you know them?"

"Bless you," said the relentless Mr. Phippen with well-assumed vulgarity, "I've seen them all over and over again at Madame Tussaud's, and I should like to compare the realities with the imitations."

Poor Sir Titaniferous at this crisis would, at all events, have made a very suitable addition to the Chamber of Horrors, till, opportunely recollecting that he had only to whisper to his guests, and tell Lady Georgiana to do the same, that this strange personage was *another* branch of the Hudson, opened for the *élite* of English society to traffic on, in order to insure him the *empressées* adulations of the whole assemblage. And, at once reassured by this thought, the *nouveau riche* put on his gloves, turned the key in his tin box, and said, with an air of more than resignation, as it almost amounted to *empressement*—

"Then at eight to-morrow, we shall hope to see you."

"Oh! by the bye," he added when he was half-way to the door, returning, and again laying the tin box on the table, as if it were

by the luckiest chance in the world that he remembered what he was about to say—though the truth was, from the moment he had finished his own business, he had been racking his brain to know how he should broach the subject, in the way least compromising to his own and his relative's dignity;—"by the bye, I had almost forgotten to ask you to do me another service—a mere trifle; but the fact is"—and here he again unlocked the tin box, and, lifting up a sort of tray, like those fitted into dressing or jewel-boxes, he took out from the secret recess underneath, a large claret-coloured morocco jewel-case, and opening it, displayed a necklace of large-sized brilliants and some sprays for the hair. "Fine stones, are they not?" parenthesised Sir Titaniferous.

"I am neither a lapidary nor a diamond merchant; so I am no judge. But they appear to be so—very," said Mr. Phippen.

"Well, the fact is," resumed the baronet, "they belong to my aunt, Lady De Baskerville. These are her *own*, and form no part of the family jewels. They are worth, I suppose, £4000 or £5000; but, like all the women in London, she speculated largely (and unfortunately) during the railway mania, and she has never been able to pull it up since. And Devey, and Hunt and Roskell, and a few more have become pressing, and she wants £3000 upon them, only for a year or two, for she is in great hopes of making up a match between her youngest daughter, Lady Florinda, and Lord Celonby, who, you know, *is* a millionaire; and, her last daughter married, her expenses will be much less."

"And old enough to be the young lady's grandfather is my Lord Celonby!" said Mr. Phippen, with an expression round the corners of his usually benevolent mouth, as if he had suddenly eaten wormwood; while he accompanied this expression with a sudden movement of his hand, that pushed the morocco case nearly back again to Sir Titaniferous, and tilted its glittering contents upon the table; which the latter personage perceiving, quietly replaced them, and said—

"Oh! I don't think there is much chance of the marriage taking place just yet, for Flo.," as he delighted to call her out of her own and her mother's hearing, "is gone out to the Crimea with De Baskerville, in his yacht." And by this, like all weak-minded moral cowards, who shift their ground to *humour*, as *they think*, the crotchet of their auditor, he only made matters worse by the amendment.

"Ah! well, I'm glad, at all events, that the young lady is not in electric-telegraph haste to sell herself. But as for those baubles," added Mr. Phippen, nodding his head at them, as he plunged both his hands resolutely into the nethermost abysses of his breeches pockets, "*I'm* not a diamond merchant. You had better take them over to Emanuel Brothers, in the Minorities, or, if you don't like that, I wonder you don't yourself advance the £3000 upon them, as you *say* they are worth four or five."

"Why you see, my dear Sir, I've a delicacy"—

"A *what*?" interrupted Mr. Phippen.

The baronet repeated the word; whereupon the broker got up, walked to the window, with his hands still plunged into his pockets, and did not *look* a whistle, but executed one, which for sonorous distinctness might have rivalled any of Signor Pico's.

"I mean," resumed Sir Titaniferous, changing the word, "that I have a *scruple* in taking such, or indeed any, security for this accommodation from my *aunt*. You understand? It don't *look* well to be so particular with a *relation*; and, indeed, I dare say the reason Lady De Baskerville offered *me* those jewels was, that she thought I would lend her the money without taking the diamonds or the interest."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Phippen, with a vehemence which the occasion by no means seemed to require, "no doubt; for I believe my Lady De Baskerville is what the world calls a *very* clever woman. And your very clever women, like your very clever men, always evince their cleverness by thinking of self, and *self only*."

A shrug which,—like the Vicar of Wakefield's "*I hope it may be so, my dear*" to any of Mrs. Primrose's ambitious prophesies,—might be interpreted either way as the event fell out, was Sir Titaniferous's only reply, as, gathering up the brilliants and replacing them symmetrically in their compartments, he said, after a few seconds silence—

"Then you will not oblige me in this matter?"

"Umph!" and excavating his right hand from the gulf in which it was, he held it out for the diamonds, with about as much grace and courtesy as a bear at the Zoological Gardens demands and receives a biscuit, and with another "umph!" after he had contemplated them for some seconds, Mr. Phippen said—

"Well, as I told you before, I'm *not* a diamond merchant; and even if I were, unless I had a pair of scales, and a woman to put in one of them, against these sparkling sin-traps in the other, I could not tell how much they were worth."

"You may take my word for it they are worth full £1500 *more* than I ask you to lend upon them; therefore you are perfectly safe in retaining them."

"But if I don't choose to retain them?" snapped Mr. Phippen, dropping the case on the table, as if it had been a brazier of red-hot coals, to which he seemed by no means inclined to play the Mutius, or to become the Scævola.

"Then I must only apply elsewhere."

"Stay! Pawning's like marrying, for two reasons—first, because those who pawn, like those who marry in haste, often repent at leisure; and, secondly, because—and herein lies the greatest likeness between the two barterers—the pledges are seldom redeemed, and the gain, or the sacrifice, is sure to be all on *one* side; but Gad so!" added he, with a laugh far from being more euphonious than

his previous "umph!" "I see you don't understand what I'm at. You wouldn't have me dine with Highnesses and Royal Highnesses, and all the grantees in *Lunnun*, without rubbing up my manners, would you, as well as putting on my white gloves?"

As poor Sir Titaniferous was completely mystified, and began, moreover, to entertain serious apprehensions that Mr. Phippen was a little touched in the upper story, he also entertained a passing wonder as to *who* would regulate his affairs and be the trustee of the immense wealth of which he knew him to be possessed? And, as this self-put query was losing itself in doubt, his suspicions against Mr. Phippen's sanity were further augmented by that gentleman's suddenly approaching his chair towards him, till their knees nearly touched; looking him full in the face with those terrible brown lynx eyes of his and saying, very *à propos de bottes*, as it seemed to the baronet:

"Pray, Sir Titaniferous, did you ever see the 'Beggars' Opera?"

"A—a—assuredly, Mr. Phippen," said he, backing his chair upon the first law-of-nature principle, "I have."

"Then pray do you not think that there is something very like *taking the road* with Captain Macheath, in taking a lady's jewels from her?"

"Why, yes," rejoined that very *practical*, but by no means chivalric personage, "*unless* you give her a good equivalent for them."

"Bravo, Sir Titaniferous! Mrs. Peachem herself could not have answered more *sensibly*, even when she was lecturing Polly so very sensibly about matrimony," laughed Mr. Phippen; "but you say those diamonds are worth full £1500 more than you ask me to give you on them?"

"*Full that*," interposed his companion energetically.

"Then Gad zooks, Sir! would you have me rob a lady of £1500?"

"My dear Mr. Phippen, you are *not* on the highway."

"No, Sir, I am not!—neither do I like such bye ways of doing business. Let my Lady De Baskerville keep these jewels, which are no longer *hers*, and wear them, merely signing this bond of indemnity, authorizing me to claim either the diamonds or the £3000 after the expiration of one year, whenever I shall think fit to do so;" and seizing a stamp and dipping a brush into a cup of water, that always stood on the table for that purpose, Mr. Phippen pounded it down at one corner of a long sheet of foolscap, which he forthwith filled up (but in an engrossing clerk's hand) in the following form, reading out every word as he wrote it—

"I, Phillip Phippen, bachelor, of the Stock Exchange, and of No. —, Threadneedle Street, London, in the County of Middlesex, do hereby agree, this 29th day of May, in the year of our Lord, One thousand eight hundred and fifty-five (1855), to advance, upon

a brilliant necklace and three brilliant head ornaments, the sum of three thousand pounds sterling to ——"

"Her Ladyship's Christian name?"

"Dora," responded Sir Titaniferous.

"Dora, Countess De Baskerville, widow, of No. —, Belgrave Square, London, in the aforesaid County of Middlesex, allowing her to retain in her possession and wear the said brilliants for one year, with *the proviso that she neither injures them in any way nor makes them over to any one else*; and that, at the expiration of that year, the said Phillip Phippen, bachelor, of the Stock Exchange, and No. —, Threadneedle Street, London, in the County of Middlesex, shall have a right to demand back these monies, with five per cent. interest on the same, amounting to Three thousand one hundred and fifty pounds sterling, or receive back the aforesaid brilliants from Dora, Countess De Baskerville, widow, of No. —, Belgrave Square, London, in the County of Middlesex, in lieu of the same.

"PHILLIP PHIPPEN."

And, laying down the pen and taking up a hand-bell, he rang it loudly, whereupon Mr. Montague Sedgemore instantly appeared at the door with one of those snob-annihilating bows, half D'Orsay half dancing master, with which he was wont to come, see, and conquer at Cremorne and beyond—the Surrey.

"Here, Sedgemore, witness my hand and seal."

And no sooner had the elegant Montague embellished the foolscap with his autograph, than Mr. Phippen said—

"Now you may go;" and, tossing the document to the baronet, he added, "Have the goodness to sign your name, as another witness, just above Sedgemore's; and if Lady De Baskerville likes to append her signature to it she can have the money and the diamonds, which latter I shall keep till I have her answer." And again unlocking the iron safe he put them into it. "But you must let me know before half-past two, as I am going out then, and it now wants ten minutes to one."

"Well really," said Sir Titaniferous, having unfolded his glasses and again read over the paper with his own eyes, "it is very handsome of you to allow Lady De Baskerville to retain the diamonds; but—but—the clause that she is not to injure them, or to give them to anyone else,—pardon me for saying so—but it is a *leetle* offensive, as if she *would*, my dear Sir."

"Whew! how do you know? I've known women destroy things of much more value than £4000 or £5000 worth of diamonds, and give away what, in honor and honesty, they had no more right to give away than my Lady De Baskerville will have to give away those baubles when she has given me her bond for them. At all events, *those* are my terms; and I'll make no other. However, she's not bound to accede to them."

"Oh!" rejoined Sir Titaniferous, eagerly securing the bond in his side-pocket, and taking up his hat in order to depart, "as I said before, it's very handsome of you, *very*, allowing her to keep the diamonds."

"Pooh! I don't see how I could do otherwise. It would be like taking her life, her heart, her soul; for what's a fine lady without her jewels? Why, of no more value than the poorest woman in the land; and, indeed, some might think not of half so much."

"I must drive fast to get to Belgrave-square and back by half-past two," said the baronet, consulting his elegant little breguet, that might have fitted into the interstice of the very tightest Russian uniform, "for it is now one."

"Pray," said Mr. Phippen, taking out his own portly gold warming-pan to exemplify the force of contrast, "do you call that sixpence hung in chains a *watch*? I thought Gulliver's Travels were all fudge; but I suppose there really is such a place as Lilliput, where they make those things."

"Oh, my dear Sir," said Sir Titaniferous, floundering into a compliment as he put on his gloves preparatory to his departure; "like to like. *Your* time is taken up in *great* monetary transactions, so your watch illustrates the proverb of 'tell me your company and I'll tell you who you are.'"

"Proverbs, Sir," thundered Mr. Phippen, "though generally rules of wisdom, like all other rules, have their exception; and no man's way of life can lie amid the traffic of money without his ranking among the company he frequents, or that frequent him—many a scoundrel and many a blackguard. But God forbid these epidemics were so fatally infectious that he should, as a matter of course, become either."

Not really knowing whether Mr. Phippen *meant* to be personal, but quite convinced he was more or less rabid on this particular morning, the "honorable baronet" hurried his preparations, and the next moment sprang into his chariot, and no sooner had the footman given the order—"Lady De Baskerville's! and drive fast," and it had driven off, at an almost *beaujon* speed, than the broker, who was watching it from his grated window, burst into a yell, not unlike that of a laughing hyena, as he shouted out—

"Ah! there goes another instance of 'Honesty's the best policy,' 'Virtue rewarded,' and all that sort of thing." And Mr. Phippen, who seemed to require a sedative, having no other at hand, remained drumming with his fingers on the window panes; that is, executing that celebrated fantasia, the Devil's tattoo with variations, and watching the varied expressions of hope, fear, care, caution, triumph, and despair of the human mosaic that was hurrying to and fro in the densely crowded street, till the "worthy baronet's" return, which was in an incredibly short space of time, considering the obstructions and difficulties that exist to prevent

people from getting on—more, perhaps, in the City of London than in any other part of the world.

"My dear Sir!" said Sir Titaniferous, hurrying into the room, "my aunt accedes to your proposition, and is *most* grateful to you."

"Ha! ha! ha!—'My Aunt' grateful to 'My Uncle!'—a peeress grateful to a poor devil of a broker to whom she pawns her jewels!—'Egad! it's rich! there's nothing like it on the stage! Well, I'll take her bond, and, as the gentleman in the play says about the *ha'porth* of milk and the cream that was to result from it, I'll let the honor—no, the interest—accumulate;" and, seating himself, he wrote a cheque for the £3000, and then, unlocking the iron safe, took out the diamonds, and giving them to her nephew, said—

"There, Sir, are my Lady De Baskerville's jewels, and my cheque for the money; and now I wish you a very good morning."

Sir Titaniferous took the hint and his leave.

He had no sooner driven off for the second time, than the broker tore open the bond and looked at it for some minutes as fixedly as if he had been turned to stone; then suddenly closing it he threw it into the iron safe, which he locked with great energy, and, transferring the key to his pocket, paced up and down, till, in one of his transits, as he passed the office-table, he seized the hand-bell and rang it sharply.

The "listening slave" immediately appeared.

"Sedgemore! get me a bottle of soda-water?"

Sedgemore disappeared in silence, but that did not prevent his speaking out. Mr. Phippen calling for soda-water, (he did not say anything about brandy in it)—but what *could* it mean? He had never done such a thing before during the five years he had been articled to him! Certainly his movements of late *had* been *very* mysterious. Could it be possible!—and this last surmise obtruded itself on Mr. Sedgemore as he turned into a neighbouring coffee-house in quest of the soda-water. Yes! *could* it be possible that Mr. Phippen, at his age, and bay-wig, was stealing a march upon him, and playing the Lovelace at Cremorne or "The Grecian?" There was no knowing; and Miss Susannah Simmons, a young lady of great sensibility and shrewdness, whose acquaintance he had made at the Rosherville Gardens, had assured him, only on the previous Monday, that "*Them* elderly *gents* was always the worst;" and surely Susannah ought to know about the elders? "Ugh! if I thought so, and could only *catch him out*," mused the moral Montague, grinding his teeth and wringing the neck of the soda-water bottle, which luckily was not a chicken, "wouldn't I ———?" but whatever Mr. Sedgemore *would* have done was opportunely, or inopportunely, prevented by the sudden popping of the soda-water cork, and the contents of the bottle flying up into his face and all over his shirt-front, which considerably damped

his ardour and cooled his courage, without, however, allaying his suspicions, which were, on the contrary, rather increased by the Anacreontic manner in which Mr. Phippen quaffed another bottle of soda-water he had at length succeeded in bringing to him.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH MANY STRANGE OCCURRENCES TAKE PLACE;
SOME OF A NATURE SUFFICIENTLY MYSTERIOUS TO
HAVE INCREASED MR. SEDGEMORE'S SUSPICIONS, AND
SUFFICIENTLY EQUIVOCAL TO HAVE CONFIRMED MISS
SUSANNAH SIMMONS' THEORY OF ELDERLY GENTOLOGY;
MORE ESPECIALLY AS THE SEQUEL PROVES, THAT
THERE IS NO FIRE WITHOUT SMOKE, ANY MORE THAN
NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE.

It is in vain to decry hero-worship as long as the decriers confine their labours to lapidating and trampling those who have been born idols or chiselled by the great sculptor, Destiny, out of the quarries of time merely to mould others of the coarsest and commonest clay and stick them in the places of the former, thus converting a Pantheon into a bear-ward. And therefore it is, that though no great admirer of Mr. Charles Dickens in general, or of any of that wide-spread *clique*, the Humbugences, to which he belongs, yet one of his works we always did and ever shall admire exceedingly. We allude to his "Oliver Twist," a fiction which, for good feeling, utility, and truth, gains considerably by being compared with Mr. Thomas Carlyle's fiction of "Oliver Twist, or Twisted Oliver." All men write, more or less, from their own sympathies; but though a steady omnipresence of self, and a successful though unwarrantable ambition, bulwarked by extreme personal moroseness, may have found at once a chronicler and a panegyrist in Mr. Carlyle, there will always, as posterity grows older, be an increasing majority of impartial historic analyzers, who will think of Oliver the Usurper as even his favourite daughter, poor Frances Cromwell, did, which true bill she has left on record in that touching letter of hers to her lover, Charles Waller, the Protector's Chaplain; where, after saying how often and how vainly she had tried to reason herself out of her love for him by calling in pride to remind her of her superior station, she adds: "But conscience insinuates that I had no right to the station I held; and that the respect I received from all ranks of people was the effect of fear. It convinced me that the former was gained by *an unjust usurpation and cruelty*, and the latter would most unquestionably diminish in proportion as the power of my father declined; consequently, that the violent difference that I imagined

to subsist between our respective stations was purely imaginary. Besides, the conduct of the Protector to you convinced me that even ambition did not think it beneath its dignity to be intimate with merit. Then I would recollect the fascinating charms of your conversation and the graces of your mind, polished to the highest degree of literary splendour. These circumstances united to show me how vain it was to attempt my cure by having recourse to pride, and I therefore gave it up."

Poor Frances Cromwell! poor Charles Waller! Child and Chaplain, ye were alike but stumblingblocks, to be kicked aside and trampled down in the path of Mr. Carlyle's great man, whose whole career strongly tempts one to believe the curious story narrated so circumstantially by Echard, of Cromwell (on the eve of the Battle of Worcester) meeting by appointment the old Gentleman in the wood, and there entering into indentures with him for the exact number of years his power and life lasted; though Oliver tried hard for an extension of the *Roland* he had received. But the nameless Personage was inexorable, and drove a stringent bargain. Now, what inclines me to a belief in this legend is, that

Non multus premor!

But to return to the two fictions of the two Olivers. Having stated in what consists their difference, it is but right to point out in what they resemble each other, "*and the like*," if, indeed, it be not objected that *nullum simile quod idem est*; for the idiosyncrasy of Mr. Dickens's Oliver is, that he is always asking for "more;" whereas Mr. Carlyle's Oliver, scorning alike parochial and parliamentary *convenances*, is always helping himself to more! Monsieur de Montalembert has been kind enough, after having imagined the present of England, to predict its future—a sure sign that the gifted and exceedingly amiable foreigner has not been admitted to Madame La Grande Bretagne's *petit lever*, or he might also have predicted that *her* future, compared with the onward march of other nations, cannot be so very brilliant after all, unless she has that terrible triple cancer of social, literary, and political HUMBUG from which she is now suffering first skilfully operated on. However, let us leave both the "high-level sewer" and the "low-level sewer," and return to our own more immediate business, first candidly confessing that this preliminary flourish of trumpets from Naseby to Cheney-row, and from the Commonwealth to the Empire, was wholly and solely to usher in the incontrovertible remark that hero-worship never can be put down, as long as one man shall have a single brain in his head, a single glow in his heart, an inch more in his mind, and, above all, a shilling more in his pocket, than another. And to prove how deep-rooted it is as a social institution, it is by no means a see-saw, upped, and downed, at two extreme ends, with "*a deal*" of vacancy between them; but has a sliding scale, from kings to kangaroos, from thinkers to tinkers, from

conquerors to convicts, from orators to organ-players, from singers to sinners, from Memnon to mummies, and from Cadmus to cads. And it so happened that Mr. Phippen was *the* hero of the latter fraternity; but, alas! what hero can invariably "behave as such," and act up to his worship, and not occasionally skip and go on like a mere ordinary mortal, as if nothing was expected from him? And so it was, we are sorry to say, with Mr. Phippen on the day he sallied out after having swallowed that unusual bottle of soda-water which Mr. Sedgemore had brought him. Immediately after he left his office, but did not leave a single order, nay, more, he did not utter even a word; and, silent drinking being a thing that Mr. Sedgemore was totally unaccustomed to, of course he did not know what inferences to draw from it; so he sat down and drew a profile of Miss Susannah Simmons on Mr. Phippen's blotting-paper, accompanying the sketch by the sister art of music, as travestied in "Villikins and his Dinah," till he came to the "*cold pison*," when, bursting into a fine strain of energetic prose, he flung down the pen, exclaiming—

"Blowed if that bottle of soda-water *ain't* 'most as bad to me!"

Meanwhile Mr. Phippen, totally unconscious of the conjectures his unwonted potations were giving rise to, pursued his way westward down Threadneedle-street, regardless of the innumerable overtures made to him from *high places*, of "Brompton?" "Hoxford-street?" "Paddington, Sir?" or the beavers that were touched to him, which, indeed, almost amounted to a "*testimonial*" from "The Old Hats Club;" but still Mr. Phippen shot on, regardless of it all, till the tongues between the dragons' teeth of the cads rose up in arms, and on and on, from first to last, might have been heard this one hope of many voices—

"I say, Bill! I hope as that 'ere jolly old cove ain't been a consulting on none of them there quack doctors, and they've been a telling on him to walk for his 'ealth, and such like?"

If such *were* the case, all we can say is, that Mr. Phippen was following the prescription most zealously; for his pace was of that accelerated description that those who had leisure to think, and thoughts to spare from their own affairs, arrived at the (to them) satisfactory conclusion that the old gentleman was walking for a wager, and that if he only continued, as he was doing, to act up to "Old Rapid's" advice, and "push on and keep moving," he would certainly win it. And he *did* push on till he reached Oxford-street, where he stopped, took off his hat for a few seconds, and drew a long breath, after which he turned into "Mart's," the large fruit-shop, selected a couple of dozen of very fine oranges, and, further gave half-a-guinea for a not very large basket of strawberries; but if the basket was not large, the strawberries were; and he capped this extravagance with a couple of pounds of hothouse grapes, and half-a-dozen apricots, for which latter he paid twelve shillings. When they were all packed in one long,

boat-shaped basket, and embowered in a perfect vineyard of fresh vine leaves, Mr. Phippen was seized with a fit of admiration.

"'Pon my life," said he, "that looks very rural and pretty!"

"Won't you try one, Sir?" said the smiling shopman, handing him another circular basket of apricots.

"Much obliged to you, not any I thank you. I'm like the daws, cherries are *my* fruit. Ha! ha! ha!"

"I'm sorry, Sir, we haven't any cherries yet."

"What? no 'Cherry ripe! cherry ripe! ripe, I cry,' eh!—well give my compliments to the blossoms and tell them to make haste, will you? And also I shall be much obliged to you to let some one call a cab for me; but to mind the horse is a good one, and fresh, as he'll have to go about twelve miles there and back."

When the cab came, and it, the horse, and the driver had undergone Mr. Phippen's scrutiny, and received his approval, and the basket of fruit had been put into it, he himself got in, telling the cabman that he wanted to go to Brentford, but not into the town, nor to the Three Kings, but that he was on the Chiswick side to turn down a lane, called Hazeltree-lane, and then he (Mr. Phippen) would stop him and tell him where to go.

"But first of all," added he, "stop at a saddler's, where they sell lady's whips and dandy dog-collars, something natty and smart. I don't want a collar for a bull-dog, nor a muzzle for a bear. Now go on!"

And with a wave of his hand and a "good day" to the bowing shopman, Mr. Phippen leant back, elongated his feet, and drove off, but soon had to rouse himself from his *dolce far niente* by the stoppage of the vehicle at the saddler's, where he alighted; the saddler having, as he saw him do so through his shop window, hastily put, *en evidence*, a large, solid, substantial, well-worked, rather dear, and *not* the latest-fashioned saddle; thinking, from the appearance of this new customer, that *that* would be the very thing to suit him, and so he should get rid of it at last. But this was only another instance of the folly of judging from appearances, as Mr. Phippen's very first words dispelled the illusion, for he said, looking round the shop—

"I want a small dog-collar, something light and pretty. Ah! there's the sort of thing—that red morocco one with the silver plate upon it."

"It's not real silver, Sir," said the man, handing it to him: "but I could have a real silver plate put on it, if you wish it?"

"No, this will do very well," replied Mr. Phippen, examining it; "but do you ever put any bells to these sort of collars, little round bells perforated?"

"Oh, yes, Sir, frequently!" and the saddler opened a drawer and produced a box of bells of various sizes.

"Ah, these are the very things! Just be so good as to hang

three of them to this collar. I suppose it would take too long a time to have a name engraved on the plate?"

"Depends entirely, Sir, upon the length of it—that is, the number of letters; but a name *and* address could be done in an hour."

"I don't want an address, only a name of three letters—T.I.M."

"Oh! *that* I can get done for you in five minutes, Sir, at the silversmith's next door."

"Can you? Then I'll take this collar."

"Thank you, Sir."

"How much is it?"

"With the bells it will be five shillings, Sir; and the engraving I suppose sixpence more. I'll just step in with it myself."

"Oh, stop! there's no difference, I suppose, in the fashion of dogs' and cats' collars?"

"None whatever, Sir, except," added the man, smiling, "I should think it was quite a rise in life for a cat to wear a dog's collar."

"Rise in life! 'Egad! a cunning cat has twenty to an honest dog's one. You never heard of a dog upon a house-top, did you?"

"Why, no, Sir."

"Well, there it is."

The saddler almost instantly returned, saying the collar would be sent in in less than five minutes; and as he again took up his position behind the counter he thought he might, like an over-tired rider, as well make an effort to *get off his saddle*, so, laying his hand upon the pommel, he called Mr. Phippen's attention to it by saying—

"A very superior article this, Sir; I'll venture to say better made goods could *not* be bought."

"I don't doubt it; but I don't keep horses, and you know, a saddle's no use unless one can get the right horse to put it on."

"Oh! beg your pardon, Sir; perhaps you will do me the favour of taking a few of my cards, in case you should know of any gentlemen who *might* require anything in my way?"

"With all my heart, Mr. Leatherbey," said he, reading the card.

"Much obliged to you, Sir."

And as a shop-boy from the silversmith's next door now brought in the collar, Mr. Phippen transferred the silver-paper packet to his pocket, saying—

"Good day, Mr. Leather."

"Leatherbey, Sir," corrected the latter.

"Ah, Leatherbey! So it is. 'Egad! they say there's nothing like leather; and that's the way, I suppose, that I made the mistake."

"No offence, Sir," bowed Mr. Leatherbey, as he himself shut to the cab door, when once more Mr. Phippen found himself *en route* for Brentford; and the first green lane they turned down

from Bayswater to cut across to Kensington, he began to enjoy the drive, as there was a perfect firmament of primroses and violets peeping out of the hedges, while the bridal May above them—

“Balmed soft, like an angel’s blessing,
Through the ambient summer air.”

There are some natures so patented by Heaven that no evil contacts can corrupt, no prosperity parch, no wealth warp, no misfortunes mildew, or no ingratitude harden them, and from whose elastic verdure, let fate’s storms and whirlwinds beat upon them as they may, those unobtrusive moral daisies—kind thoughts and acts—are still ever springing. Such a nature was Phillip Phippen’s; and to all such, to return to the woods and fields, hear the greetings of the birds, and inhale the breath of the flowers, is to feel among their *true* kindred, who are incapable of the cruelties and treacheries of human relations, or the neglect, the cowardice, or the hollowness of human friends (?). Such natures are generally tried in *many furnaces*; but shall they not be purified at last to whom God has spoken in adversity and in prosperity, by the empty cup and the broken cistern, by the full one and the flowing fountain—and in many voices, low and loud, having a providence in each and all—shall *they*, not more than others, be able to put aside the veil of beauty He has hung between Heaven and Earth, and look up, through the humblest of created flowers, to those glorious regions of uncreated light where He, the living God, “inhabitheth the praises of eternity?”

But of all these furnaces there is none so fiery as that of memory, whose relentless branding-irons are ever ready to sear the heart and brain for some gaud of hope or happiness pilfered in youth, but dearly expiated through long after-years. And through this furnace and under this ordeal the old man seemed now passing, for in going through a narrow lane, the luxuriant boughs of the woodbine and hawthorn forced a passage through the window: Phillip Phippen broke off a branch of the latter, and for a moment, as he buried his face in it, appeared to revel in its delicious perfume; but when at length he held it at a little distance from him, and began to contemplate the delicate tracery of its fairy-like flowers, and the cool, bowery look of its green varnished leaves, a thorn ran into his finger.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, flinging the branch from him out of the window, “always the same;—fair, sweet, alluring and treacherous! Fool! to be pierced by you a second time, and in my old age too.”

And leaning back he pulled his hat over his eyes, folded his arms, and appeared to be sleeping. Perhaps he was!

* * * * *

“Beg your pardon, Sir, but this is Hazeltree-lane,” said the cabman, stopping and alighting about three-quarters of an hour after Mr. Phippen had thrown the spray of hawthorn out of the window.

"Oh, is it?" said he, rousing himself, "well, let me out, and you may go on to Brentford, cabby, and bait your horse; but be *here*—let me see, it's now a quarter to five—then be here at a quarter to nine *exactly*, and wait till I come. What's your number?—947."

"Very good, Sir, a quarter before nine. Take this here basket with you, Sir, or leave it in the cab?"

"No, no, give it to me. 'Egad! a pretty thing if I had forgotten them after bringing them all this way.'" And so saying, Mr. Phippen tucked the long basket under his arm, and proceeded up the lane, till suddenly stopping and looking about him, he uttered the following soliloquy, which might indeed have occasioned Mr. Sedgemore to form far more compromising conjectures than ever the soda-water had done.

"'Gad! I haven't brought her last letter; but I am sure she said Hazeltree Lane, and that I was to go on till I came to where three roads met, when I should see a public-house, and I was to inquire there the way to Hazeltree Cottage; but that if she could possibly get away from her mother, she'd come and meet me. 'Pon my life it's funny too to take a house and not know where it is. Well, never mind, as long as she and they all are happy and comfortable, though I suppose Bob's at school. I wish I could have come down here before, when I sent Sarah Nash to get the place ready for them, for it is awkward not to know one's way to the house one's going to; well, it can't be helped, I must only do as she said, and go on till I come to the public-house.'"

To which ten minutes more walking brought him.

"Public-house, indeed!" said he, looking up at a fine stuccoed, flat-roofed house, with small stone balconies to the windows, and a portico to the door, on the top of which were two tubs, containing American aloes; while all the windows had French blinds to them. The house itself standing in a large space, with a fine red gravel sweep by which to approach it, while through a half-open door, on the left hand side, was the vista of a large leafy garden, with a bowling-green and the Thames bounding it, like a silver fillet beyond. From the centre of the portico hung the sign, which announced itself as—

"THE FOUR ALLS,

BY THOMAS LEVENS.

Wines Neat as Imported.—Home-Brewed Beer, To be drunk on the Premises."

The Four Alls were portrayed by the artist in a board divided into four compartments, something (with the exception of the painting) after the style of Parmagiano's early pictures. In one of these squares was represented the Church, symbolized by a church with a large extinguisher for a steeple, and a clergyman in a white surplice conducting, with a jaunty air, through the church-

yard a happy pair to the Hymeneal altar. In the next compartment, the State was exemplified by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, in her coronation robes, holding a sceptre, which had a strong family likeness to a drumstick, while the Dick Tinto, having flushed her Majesty's face "with a purple grace," gave her the appearance of having *au pied de la lettre* obeyed the last line of the legend on Mr. Levens's sign. The third solid square was intended as a homage to the Army, and was, consequently, illustrated by a light infantry soldier spitting a Russian on his bayonet, as he might have done a lark, and apparently carrying him home for his supper. And then, last, though not least, came the Agricultural Interest, pathetically set forth by a field groaning with waving corn, and a farmer groaning with fat, eyeing it like a rogue in grain, while a celebrated Protectionist leader (and here the likeness was striking), looking

"Like hungry Jew in wilderness,
Rejoicing o'er his manna,"

was talking to, and apparently *chaffing* him.

"Public-house, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Phippen, as he looked from the house to the sign, and from the sign to the house; "there's no such vulgarity to be found now-a-days. I only wonder that on the dogs'-meat barrows they don't inscribe, in gold letters—

‘DOGS'-MEAT ESTABLISHMENT,’

and upon rat-traps and mouse-traps—

‘VERMIN ESTABLISHMENT.’

But I don't see a soul about this fine place, and all the doors and windows are open. I suppose they are all playing at bowls. 'The proverb says 'Those who play at bowls must expect rubbers;' but, 'egad! I think Mr. Thomas Levens may expect *robbers*, if he leaves all his house open in this way, and no one to look after it. At all events I'll go in and see if there is a bell in the house, by which I can make anybody hear."

And so saying, he walked into the bar, which had every token of having been recently and numerouslly filled, to judge by the innumerable tumblers with teaspoons in them, redolent of, and still containing remnants of, gin and brandy-and-water, and the strewn fag-ends of cigars. However, at that moment it was perfectly empty; but as Mr. Phippen put up his glasses and looked around, his eye was attracted by a gilt frame over the mantel-piece, containing a paper printed in gold letters, and elaborately embellished with wreaths of roses and forget-me-nots, tied with blue true lovers' knots, something after the fashion of "freedom's of cities," only minus the gold box. As the glare of the afternoon sun cast false shadows on these gilded letters, Mr. Phippen, as there was nobody there to ask him to take a chair, took one with-

out being asked, and standing up upon it, he read the following announcement:—*

“ November, 1804.

“ On the 15th instant, at Croydon, Surrey, aged 56, Mr. Thomas Levens, many years Clerk of the Parish there. Some few years back, having a very numerous family, he filled the following offices in Croydon and its neighbourhood to maintain them: he was Parish clerk, barber and publican, having many years kept the White Horse, on Dubbin-hill, near the church; provided musick for dinners, balls, &c., &c.; taught the psalmody at home or abroad; was head-borough and bum-bailiff to the Court of Conscience; and many years one of the Wardens of the Royal Mecklenburg Freemasons’ lodge at Croydon. He was a thorough good-natured man; well respected; has left a large family, and taught the violin, flute, bassoon, and French-horn.”

“ Umph; I’ve seen worse pedigrees and worse epitaphs too,” said Mr. Phippen, descending from his chair; “ but I wonder which of these numerous functions the present incumbent is away fulfilling, and all his people apparently helping him. I don’t see a French-horn *here*, or ’egad I’d have a blow upon it, as practice for Sir Titaniferous’s dinner-party to-morrow—ha! ha! ha! But I *must* find a bell, or something to make them hear, for I can’t stay here all day;” and still, holding his glasses to his eyes, he walked out into the passage, and at the further end of it found a range of some eight or nine bells; and underneath each, against the wall, on little oval white China plates, in black letters, were Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; but the tenth, instead of a figure, had a larger plate, with “ *fire bell*” inscribed upon it; and a bell-pull, suspended from it, with a large egg-shaped piece of Derbyshire spar attached to it for a handle.

“ *The very thing!*” cried Mr. Phippen, and depositing his basket of fruit on a chair, he seized the marble egg with both hands, and began ringing away as vigorously as he had seen ringers do in a belfry when a triple bob major was required. He was getting very warm from his exertions; but he had not to ring long, for presently came rushing in, like a human Niagara, all the people from the bowling-green—men, women, children, and dogs—screaming! swearing! talking! barking! headed by the landlord, a burly red-faced man in a white apron, suffering apparently from asthma, so that he seemed to be making ineffectual attempts to blow his progenitor’s flute, bassoon, and French-horn, all at once. At length he panted out—

“ Where! where! where is the fire?” and Mr. Phippen’s languid appearance, leaning against the bannister, and fanning himself with his hat, confirmed the illusion.

* This is extracted verbatim from the Obituary in “ *The Gentleman’s Magazine*” for November, 1804.

"No! no!" said he, as soon as he himself had recovered sufficient breath from his exertions to speak; "there's no fire. Ah! get me a glass of water?"

"A glass of water! Ring the fire-bell for a glass of water!—and ring it, too, as if all London was on fire, Sir. I don't care *who* you are; but you are *no* gentleman! Gentlemen don't come into a house like this to call for a glass of water. Glass of water, indeed! And above all, they don't ring the fire-bell to order it!—water, indeed. If you want water, there's the Thames; and it's a pity but what you'd been soused in it before you had come into a respectable house and frightened females as you have done. Look at Mrs. Levens, Sir—the state she and her cap are in. Had this happened twenty-five years ago, Sir, it might have caused her death, and that of my son, Sir; and—and——." But here Mr. Levens was so choked with passion that it requires another chapter to give it vent.

CHAPTER XVI.

A LONG CHAPTER, IN WHICH A SHORT EPISODE OF A LONG TISSUE OF INFAMY IS RECORDED, BY ONE WHO REFUSED TO JOIN IN IT.

HAVING been so particularly ordered to look at Mrs. Levens and her cap, to which Mr. Levens, with the trembling fore-finger of his right hand was still pointing, Mr. Phippen raised his eyes, and slowly turned his head in that direction, but very much with the cowed look of an old pointer, under the shadow of a raised cane, when he is told to look at the bone he has purloined, the article of wearing apparel he has torn, or any other misdemeanor he may have committed. But even when he ventured upon a more assured stare, he was not much the wiser for what he saw, as, in the first place, Mr. Phippen was no judge of millinery, and did not even affect to be so; therefore, although Mrs. Levens' cap, with its weeping willows of green and pink satin ribbon, *was* hind part before, *he* did not see anything remarkable in that circumstance, but only concluded that, as it was the fashion to wear bonnets on the shoulders, it was also the fashion to wear caps in an inverse style. And in the next place, although Mrs. Levens was kicking vigorously—rather too much so he thought, considering the part she was representing was that of a fainting lady—still, as he had told Mr. Leatherbey, *not* keeping horses, he was no judge of kicking any more than of millinery—therefore, what struck him as the most peculiar incident with regard to Mrs. Levens' situation was, that all this muscular restiveness was taking place in the arms of a tall mildewed-looking young man, of a cadaverous complexion, and

lank black hair and mustachios, and as Mrs. Levens was exceedingly fat and short this young gentleman had the greatest possible difficulty in preventing the globular mass intrusted to his protection from rolling out of his arms on to the floor. Now it was not so much this graphic illustration of *multum in parvo* even that puzzled Mr. Phippen; but (to use the expression of his own thought) "what part in the play this young man acted?" Was it chance that had caused him to be so heavy-laden, or was Mr. Levens's family conducted upon the same principles as *Monsieur Crepin's*; and was this spider in mustachios the tutor; and just as Mrs. Levens was beginning to understand his system, was he going to be dismissed?—and was this the real flame which the ringing of the fire-bell had caused to burst forth. Amid so much that was vague and vapour a glimmering of the truth, like a ray of sunshine piercing through a fog, at length illumed his understanding, and he became fully sensible that he had caused a great hubbub, and that some sort of reparation was due to those people, or at all events was expected by them; so, taking out his purse and abstracting from it a five-pound note, which simple act alone, irrespective of its ultimate destination, acted as a charm in allaying Mr. Levens's choler and abating Mrs. Levens's kicks; but, having returned the purse to his pocket, and taken the bank-note gingerly between his finger and thumb, Mr. Phippen approached Mrs. Levens, and, with innumerable bows, said—

"'Pon my life, ma'am, I'm sorry to have occasioned you so much alarm, and if you'll allow me I'll explain how the whole thing occurred; only first of all, you know, ma'am, at every fire the first engine that arrives receives five pounds, so do me the favour of getting a new cap, as I see I've been the cause of bringing yours to play all over this young gentleman's shoulders;"—a mode of proceeding which Mr. Phippen found very successful.

"Oh! Sir," said Mrs. Levens, reviving rapidly under the magnetic contact of the crisp silver-paper, "you're very good, I'm sure; but there's no occasion for *that*."

There never is when you give or pay money; it is only when you have not the power of doing either, that you *should* do so becomes an imperious necessity, which *must* be enforced.

Here Mr. Levens himself rolled over, like a spring tide of the Pacific Ocean, to join the group, and add his intreaties to his wife's, that the gentleman would not think any more of the matter. But the mob, who had received no such good reasons for satisfaction, still besieged the door, which presented a curious assortment of noses and chins, that, being elevated by the tip-toes of their owners, flung back their hats upon their shoulders, so that they appeared like a servile imitation of the women's bonnets, till Mr. Levens, being himself now perfectly satisfied, had no idea of pandering to such vulgar and obtrusive curiosity; so seizing a tankard, which, though in reality empty, was supposed by the

spectators to be full, he advanced towards the door, and raising it, while he backed his hand to a level with his right ear, as if about to hurl it amid the assembled crowd, he said in an authoritative voice, which must have been an heirloom from the time his father was bailiff to the Court of Conscience—

“Come, be off; will you? There’s *no* fire; it’s only a gentleman that rang the fire-bell for a lark.”

And in a second this produced the effect of dispersing the mob, so that only the *habitués*, or those who were bred to the bar, and could afford to pay their way, remained to form a select circle round the landlord and Mr. Phippen, while the latter favoured them with the particulars of his invasion of

“THE FOUR ALLS.”

“It was, as you very justly remark, Sir,” said Mr. Levens, now mild and sweet as a glass of his own milk-punch, “*most* imprudent for us all to leave the house without a soul in it; for, instead of being a gentleman like yourself, who *is* a gentleman—(what a Janus Mr. Phippen must have been! since ten minutes before he was *no* gentleman; however, it only shows how cheap and plentiful (?) gentlemen are, since five pounds can make one)—it might just as well have been some burglar or ticket-of-leave man. For *myself*, Sir, I should have enjoyed the joke of your ringing the fire-bell exceedingly, had it not been for Mrs. Levens; but she’s extremely nervous and delicate, as you see, Sir.”

Mr. Phippen looked about, and seeing a larder with a glass window, behind which were two cold roast chickens, a tongue, and some custards and jellies, he concluded that it was *there* Mrs. Levens kept her delicacies.

“In fact, Sir,” continued Mr. Levens, lowering his voice, though by no means so much as to be inaudible below the bar, “I’m sorry to say Mrs. Levens has always had dreadful confinements, which have greatly shattered her nerves—frightful times!—My son, Sir!” and here Mr. Levens pointed to the moustachios, as if to adduce an indisputable confirmation of the last announcement. “But what carried us all away was to see a boat-race, Sir; and we thought we should not be gone five minutes.”

“Well,” laughed Mr. Phippen, “it would have been too bad if your house *had* been burnt down, since you went for the water before even the alarm of fire was given.”

And Mr. Levens laughed, and Mrs. Levens laughed; Mr. Tom Levens (that consistent result of one of Mrs. Levens’s “frightful times”) did *not* laugh, but he smiled, which was a great deal for him to do, and twirled his moustache; in short, we very much doubt, if Mr. Phippen had *not* possessed a five-pound note in the world (though the process would then certainly have been slower), whether he would not have equally conciliated the Levens family; for good temper is a natural good breeding, which, to all reason-

able persons, is more acceptable than that which is artificial ; as, on the contrary, the politeness of an ill-tempered man or woman has in it something repelling, for it is hypocrisy added to malignity. But Mr. Phippen, being determined to follow up the conquest he had evidently made, said—

“Be so good, Mr. Levens, as to let me have a bottle of your sherry ; and,” added he, timidly, having seen that water was *not* popular in that house, “some very cold water.”

But water, like many equally weak things, depends upon what company it is in, to be either despised or thought a great deal of. And so ordered, and under the auspices of a whole bottle of sherry, it *now* rose like an inundation in Mr. Levens’ estimation.

“Directly, Sir ! You shall have the best bottle in my cellar ; and I think I *may* say, though, perhaps, I ought *not* to say it, that I can give you as good a bottle of sherry as any man in England. It is some that my father had given him by the Grand Master of the Mecklenburg Lodge, when he was bailiff to the Court of Conscience, and it was bottled *the very day* the Prince of Wales, that is, His late Majesty, George the Fourth, was born, Sir ; in fact, it’s wine I *don’t* generally sell. This way, if you please, Sir ! There’s a cool parlour, which you can have to yourself. Tom (to the moustachios) see that the shutters are open in No. 3. Here, Phoebe ! you go to the pump for a jug of fresh water ; take the glass jug ; and *be sure* that you pump a good lot of water before you fill the jug, that it may be *very cold*.” And so saying, Mr. Levens ushered Mr. Phippen into *the* parlour, while he went down into the cellar to excavate from its cobwebs a bottle of the yellow-sealed *vino puro de Xeres* of the Mecklenburg Masonic Lodge.

Mr. Phippen seated himself in a Windsor arm-chair at a small round table near the open window (about which Mr. Tom Levens continued to hover, doing something to the blind that was *not* imperative), so that when Mr. Levens, senior, returned simultaneously with “Phoebe,” and the latter placed a small tray with the jug of water and one tumbler and one wine-glass before him, Mr. Phippen, who had never read any novels but Smollet’s and Fielding’s ; “The Vicar of Wakefield ;” the original edition of “Tristram Shandy,” and “The Spiritual Quixote,” took it for granted that it was a thing as regular as the bill, to ask the landlord to share in any potations in which a traveller—whether *bonâ fide* or otherwise—might indulge ; so, seeing the inhospitable provision of glasses, he said to the Hebe of “The Four Alls”—

“My good girl, bring a couple more wine-glasses.”

An order which Phoebe having obeyed, with her usual promptitude in attending to similar requests, Mr. Phippen filled them, inviting Mr. Levens and his son to join him in a toast he begged leave to propose—

“Which is, landlord, May your alarm-bell never be rung from any greater necessity than it was to-day !”

"You are very good, Sir. I'm sure I hope not; and I also hope you'll kindly excuse the mistake I made in my hurry and fright of speaking to you in the manner I did."

"All very natural, Mr. Levens; for when fire and water meet they are sure to produce a hiss; and as I brought you up from the water that is the least I could expect for my fire. But I'm surprised, having read that very creditable account of—your father, I presume—over the mantel-piece in the bar, to find you settled in *this* part of the world."

"Well, Sir, so are many people; for I may say that my father's son might have done 'most anything, or had 'most anything in Croydon; but the fact is, Sir, Mrs. Levens being of a great Brentford family—

"The 'Buttons,' I suppose?" put in Mr. Phippen, wishing with, perhaps, pardonable vanity, to show his topographical knowledge.

"No, Sir, the 'Hooks;' I thought it only right to consult the wishes of *her* relations and settle here."

"Quite right, Sir. Pray let me offer you another glass of your capital sherry; don't know that I ever tasted better, really."

Mr. Levens excused himself, thinking he could finish the bottle when his guest was gone; but Mr. Tom Levens, having no such future in view, "seized the present and lived to-day;" that is, took the second glass.

"Come, come, to drink Mrs. Levens' health," persuaded Mr. Phippen, blandly replenishing the landlord's glass, "as you used to do, I have no doubt, in the days of your courtship. Most young men that are worth having are generally *hooked*; but seeing what a loving couple you still appear to be, 'egad! you must have been regularly hooked-and-eyed together—ha! ha! ha!" Mr. Phippen taking the initiative in laughing at his own execrable pun, which, however, was loudly echoed by Mr. Levens, senior; but Mr. Tom Levens, who seemed to think it was no joke, swallowed the sherry instead.

"And pray," said Mr. Phippen, "which of his grandfather's—I mean his paternal grandfather's—numerous and all equally meritorious avocations does your son follow?"

"None, Sir; for his grandfather Hook dealt in second-hand books and for many years did all the printing of the hand-bills and such like in and about Brentford, and, indeed, I may say, as far as Turnham Green; so it was his wish, and also my wife's, that he should be in the *literary* line, for which he's had a first-rate education."

"Oh, indeed! Then you are an author, Sir?" said Mr. Phippen, turning suddenly round to Mr. Tom Levens, with a great increase of respect in his manner.

"Not *exactly*, Sir," replied that young gentleman, looking damper and more mildewed than ever, as he smoothed his ruffled

right whisker with a lachrymose expression of slightly offended dignity, that seemed to say, "not quite so *low* as *that*, either!"

"The fact is, Sir," said Mr. Levens père, coming to the rescue, "my son has been unfortunate in the onset of his literary career, in falling in with some rather objectionable *specimens*, which have given him a distaste to the profession. But *lawr!* as I tell him, there are black sheep in all professions, but we mustn't condemn the whole herd on that account; and so it is with the Press, Sir."

"Oh! you are connected with the Press?"

"Only for a very short time, Sir, I was on a paper called *The Weekly Thunderer*."

"What, as reporter, I suppose?"

"No, Sir; weekly papers have no reporters; but as *colabrateur*, which, in plain English, means *skimmer*; that is, to collect all the cream of the daily papers."

"Ah! I understand; and make a sort of Cheddar cheese of it for the Sunday paper?"

"It is very much that, Sir; and occasionally I had to write reviews."

"Well, I shouldn't at all dislike that, if I was capable of doing it as I have no doubt you are."

"It is not for me to say whether I am or not, Sir; but to be a newspaper reviewer now-a-days, one is expected to be capable of anything, which, thank Heaven! I am *not*."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, Sir, there is wheel within wheel, and most books are either praised or abused to order; and if I sold my time, I was not willing to sell my conscience."

"Right, young man! I respect you for it. But surely there must be *some* honest, impartial critics?"

"Of course there are, Sir; but that does not prevent there being a certain knot of unprincipled, unscrupulous, and influential men, who have organized a sort of literary Inquisition. Their emissaries and their engines are *everywhere*. It is a perfect *atmosphere* of corruption and intrigue as far as regards *individuals*, from whose influences there is no escaping; and, by always taking the popular side of every question in their journals, books, and magazines, they have a sort of varnished clap-trap public fair fame which is all *they* care for; and, therefore, none but their victims and the *initiated* know the fearful sewer of iniquity that their power springs from, more especially as their motto is 'Union is strength.' And, however, they may secretly malign and despise each other, as most rogues do, yet, in print, they stick together, and will, in the teeth of the strongest facts, lie each other into and out of everything; more particularly a fellow of the name of Fudgester, who is jackal to all the literary lions and tigers. *They* get him government appointments, and *he* repays them in puffs, perjuries, and adulation to the most unlimited extent."

"What an odious wretch! I only wish I could come across him, and I'd pull his nose for him."

"No, Sir, you wouldn't."

"How, Sir,—I wouldn't?"

"I mean, Sir, you couldn't; he hasn't got any nose *to pull*!"

"Oh! that's another affair; but I suppose he's not a cherubim, and could be kicked?"

"Depend upon it, Sir, if *they wanted you*—I mean that gang—they'd contrive that you *should* do their dirty work, *unknown to yourself*, even if it were to signing your own death-warrant. Then for the subordinates, they keep a sort of infernal ordinary at a pot-house in the Strand, where, when they have tampered with any newspaper underlings and got them to do dirty work for which they are turned out of their employment, this infamous association keeps them in an *ad libitum* supply of tobacco and gin till they can find them further employment. But as the chief Mæcenas of this Fudgester is a Sir Janus Allpuff, who, not content with having hunted his unhappy wife nearly to death, and reduced her to the lowest ebb of pecuniary destitution from defending herself against his infamous conspiracies, also prevents her in every possible way from earning her bread; and who so useful in *this way* as Fudgester? But though Sir Janus thinks himself an exceedingly clever man, he has committed the egregious folly of leaving *no* outrage uninflicted upon his victim, so that she thoroughly *desies* as well as despises him, particularly as the very low tools he is compelled to employ to do such dirty work have, many of them, betrayed his infamy in writing, which she is only waiting a fitting opportunity to make public; but the way I came to know all this was from refusing to be made one of these tools. You must know, Sir, that the proprietor of the *Weekly Thunderer*, a man of the name of Starch, had, besides this paper, a periodical; and the *ame damnée* belonging to this periodical was an old French adventurer. This old Picassiette was a toady and legacy-hunting hanger-on, of an old Lady Dives, who was besotted with snuff and port-wine, and even more stingy than rich. Among this old lady's *other* toadies was also a Mr. George Beaucherche, another sexagenarian legacy-hunter, who was a very disgusting personage in every way, having even figured very disgracefully at a police office, but being *well* born, and what's called in good (?) society, and having *no* morals, he was of course a chum of Sir Janus Allpuff's; and now, Sir, I shall be able to give you a slight specimen of the wheel-within-wheel way this infamous gang work. This old Lady Dives had taken a great fancy to Sir Janus Allpuff's victim, and on one occasion had invited her to go on a short tour with her. The night before they set out, this old French adventurer dined at Lady Dives', and when she went up stairs to give some orders to her maid about the next day's journey, he told Sir Janus's victim, with tears in his eyes, that he was in danger the next day of having his

furniture seized. Though as ill off as any one well could be herself, she could not bear to see an old man in such distress, more especially as she had often on former occasions tried to help him in seeking a publisher for his translations; so she gave him the few pounds she then possessed, at which he affected to be overwhelmed with gratitude, and you'll see how he *proved it*. Sir Janus, as we generally judge others by ourselves, was dreadfully alarmed lest his victim should gain an influence over this silly old Lady Dives, and be left a legacy by her, which might make her in some degree independent of his persecutions, and *that* must be prevented at all hazards; but his poor victim was much too honest and straightforward a fool to continue long in favour with such a woman as Lady Dives, whose revolting meanness, amounting almost to dishonesty, so disgusted her in this journey, that in writing to the Frenchman about a manuscript of his she had taken to try and dispose of, she said how completely worn out she was with it; adding, 'I would not for Lady Dives' wealth take her bad heart and her bad breath.' On their return, when Sir Janus's victim retired to the remote village where she endeavoured in vain to shelter herself from his persecutions, this Frenchman, who was always getting her either to correct his manuscripts or give him tales of her own, wrote her letters of the most fulsome gratitude, saying that he and his wife could not sit down without feeling they owed the chairs they sat upon to her, &c., &c., and a great deal more in the same strain, and began ceaselessly urging her to write on her own account for Mr. Starch's journal. She for a long time refused, saying she did not like writing for that sort of periodical, and was sure that if she did, the terms she should ask would be much higher than Mr. Starch would like to give; but still Monsieur Picassiette (the Frenchman) continued to urge her, saying Mr. Starch did not care what he paid for articles that suited him, as he was so very rich. Now the poor lady, thinking this was a nice way of the Frenchman wishing to return the little services she had rendered him, and considering she was much too poor to refuse so advantageous a proposal, named her terms, which, though high, were immediately closed with, and for these terms the articles she sent were to be published, *without her name or initials*. So forthwith she wrote a tale for Mr. Starch's journal, with which he not only expressed himself perfectly satisfied, but, to her great surprise, enclosed her the bank notes for it by return of post, though it is not customary to pay for contributions to periodicals till those contributions are published. Now you will bear in mind, Sir, that this Mr. George Beaucherche and the Frenchman were as thick as two thieves—and never was *that* expression more appropriate; so of course Sir Janus was not long in hearing of this glimmering of independence for his victim; therefore the next thing to be done was to buy up Picassiette, and you'll see how effectually it *was* done. But first I should tell you, in order to show you the astute-

ness and diabolical cunning of this infamous gang, and the tortuous, sneaking measures they adopt to prevent their dirty work *being brought home to them*, by always employing *others*, as far a-field as possible, to do it, this Fudgester, from being a *known* tool and toady of that vile old profligate, Sir Janus Allpuff's, and a *declared* enemy of his victim's, *never* reviews her books, or mentions her name in any way, in his *own particular paper*, *The Excruciator* but merely sets on the ramifications of the gang to attack and malign her in every possible way; and, from the wording of some of these attacks, it is quite clear that Sir Janus gives the substance of what he wishes them to be, as the same internal evidence exists of such being the case, that does as to his furnishing the pith of the puffs about himself to these organs of his myrmidons; but, after all, there is nothing so silly as your *over-cunning* people, which the very bungling way in which Sir Janus gets his dirty work done will ultimately prove; and, indeed, some of the anonymous letters which his infamous literary myrmidons are set to write to his victim strangely resemble, in their little, mean, cramped characters, his own, or his jackal Fudgester's, writing. Well, Sir, at the time Sir Janus's victim sent this first tale to Mr. Starch for his journal, she was on the eve of publishing a novel, and Picassiette wrote, telling her to be *sure* and tell her publisher to send a copy to *The Weekly Thunderer*, which would give her a flaming review. She said *that* was precisely what she complained of in the present system of criticism; that all praise and all abuse was meted out in promissory notes *beforehand*, quite irrespective of the merits or demerits of the work to be reviewed. Now, another member of this worshipful *clique* of stop-at-nothings, a few grades higher as to station, but quite on a par as to blackguardism, is the Duke of Twilglenon."

"Ah! I've seen that horrid fellow," broke in Mr. Phippen; "what a horrid looking wretch it is!—for all the world like a low drunken grazier in appearance, looking as if he had just beaten or worried one of the poor animals he had been driving, to death."

"Well, Sir, I believe he does kick and worry the only animal which every Englishman has a right to ill-treat to any amount, which is his wife; for beautiful and amiable as the poor duchess is, it don't prevent her being well brutalized by her ruffianly-looking husband. Ah! Sir, I often think that had the poor Princess Charlotte lived she would have had some feeling for her own sex; and that such notoriously profligate men and infamous husbands as this Duke of Twilglenon and his *worthy* associate, that Sir Janus Allpuff, would not have disgraced the English Court. But perhaps a man in my sphere of life is no judge of such matters; only I cannot help thinking, according to the laws of God, vice is vice and infamy infamy all the world over, whether in dukes or dustmen, or in baronets or bricklayers."

"To be sure it is," said Mr. Phippen; "only ten times worse

in the patrician than in the plebeian, as *they* have not even the excuses of misery or provocation to drive them into low vice."

"Well, Sir, you will begin to perceive how useful it is to this clique to have all *grades* to bring to bear upon their complex plots, the high to awe the low, and the low to do the dirty work of the high. Besides, all this sort of thing in the way of *payments saves money*, and can buy what money cannot always do, namely, money itself. And no doubt on such men as Mr. Starch and Picassiette the idea of even knowing and being *en rapport* with *gentlemen* (?) who knew a duke by station, however low and ungentleman-like his conduct might be, had a great effect. Meanwhile Picassiette, like all clumsy traitors, thinking to cover his treachery, was *rather* too lavish in his abuse of Sir Janus in his letters to Sir Janus's victim, and, as the sequel will prove, too suspiciously exulting in the triumph she would have over him in getting such large sums from Mr. Starch for her contributions, the first of which, by the bye, appeared forthwith, but, to her great annoyance and totally *against* the express agreement, *with* her initials appended to it, which, as *she* had never appended them, amounted almost to a forgery; and what added to her annoyance was that she had just forwarded another tale to Mr. Starch, and therefore wrote to him to remonstrate against such a breach of faith again occurring. Just at this juncture her novel came out, and I was ordered to attack it, or rather her, in the most furious manner; but knowing the promise she had received of a flattering review, and that she was writing for Mr. Starch's other journal, I was too disgusted with the black treachery of the whole affair, and more especially the part Picassiette was acting, and therefore flatly refused——"

"Sir, I respect you," interrupted Mr. Phippen, "and I'll try and prove to you that I do."

Mr. Tom Levens bowed and continued—"Yes, I refused, and consequently was forthwith dismissed from *The Weekly Thunderer*, but of course others were found to do what I refused to do—most probably Mr. Starch himself, or Picassiette. When this virulent attack appeared in *The Weekly Thunderer*, Sir Janus's victim was naturally astounded and indignant at such gratuitous treachery, and wrote to upbraid both Mr. Starch and his *âme damnée* Picassiette with it, and to withdraw the second tale she had sent him. Thinking that in such a dirty business least said was soonest mended, Mr. Starch never vouchsafed a reply to this, but set Picassiette (who was paid for it) to try and cram her with as many lies as he could, which he did accordingly, but so clumsily (as is generally the case with liars) that one lie contradicted the other; and, forgetting that he had previously boasted to her what a wonderful man Mr. Starch was, as he was his own editor, reader, and caterer, and suffered no *intermediate person* to *interfere with either of his journals*, he now began by saying that the abusive review in *The Weekly Thunderer* was a greater

thunder-clap to Mr. Starch than to any one, as that *he* had been away at the Isle of Wight, leaving strict orders with his reporter that the review should be a most favourable one, and that he would rather have lost a thousand pounds than that it should have happened, and that he had instantly dismissed the reporter in his (Picassiette's) presence; 'but the fact is,' added Picassiette (and *this* he thought a master-stroke of cunning, worthy of Machiavelli or Talleyrand), 'that Sir Janus's gang, the 'guild,' got hold of the reporter, and bought him over, as they have a pot-house called 'The Cheshire Cheese,' where these fellows are well plied with gin and tobacco till they can find them other employment, when they have got them turned away from any paper or journal for doing their dirty work; this, Starch himself told me.*' In reply to this, she wrote back word, that in the first place weekly papers had no reporters; in the next place, no subordinate dare go so diametrically contrary to their employers' and principals' stringent orders; and, in the third place, he seemed to forget how often he had boasted to her of Mr. Starch's self-sufficing and ubiquitous art of transacting his own business, and of his having no intermediaries, and therefore she must request again that he would instantly return her second 'tale;' as, of course, after what had occurred, Mr. Starch could not expect or suppose that she would continue to write for him; but there was no getting this out of their clutches, as 'the tale was in type;' neither could she for many months get paid for it, and when she at length employed a lawyer to do so, he allowed Mr. Starch quietly, in the teeth of his own written agreement, to cheat her out of sixteen pounds of the stipulated twenty-five pounds. Meanwhile Picassiette's letters were incessant, filled with different stories to try and convince her of his own and Mr. Starch's guiltlessness, or rather perfect innocence, in the whole affair, always launching out into most florid eulogiums upon his, Mæcænas Starch's 'high honor!' and 'straightforwardness,' and his being *incapable!* of such conduct; which was about as logical and *probable*, Sir, as if I were now to attempt to persuade you while you were in the very act of drinking it, that my father had not, and never had had a bottle of sherry in his house."

"About!" said Mr. Phippen.

"But," resumed Mr. Tom Levens, "the victim of all this, knowing how poor and destitute Picassiette was, would not only freely have forgiven him had he honestly said, 'I am indeed sorry you should have been so treated, when my hope and wish was to serve you, by getting you such a high price for writing for Mr. Starch's journal; but as, unfortunately, my bread depends on him, I cannot run counter to him by espousing your quarrel,' she would have been the very first to urge him by no means to do so; but

* Extract from Picassiette's Letters: which, with those of the other spies, have all been kept.

she was naturally additionally irritated and disgusted at his clumsy attempts to make her believe black was white. However, as he continued to pester her with his letters and assurances of Mr. Starch's high honor and integrity, she said, 'Very well; here is a test by which I will *believe* in his sincerity. Every week, in the journal for which I wrote, he has long extracts from Thackeray's *Newcomes*; now, let him *also* give some extracts from *my* book, which was so *abused against his orders and against his will*, in the *Weekly Thunderer*, and then I will believe that circumstance occurred as *you* state it.' Picassiette wrote back, saying what she required should be done *immediately*; however, from that day to this, it never *was* done, but, instead, every week appeared either quotations from, or puffs of, Sir Janus. This was, of course, *more* than conclusive, and after that nothing could induce her to answer the little viper Picassiette's letters which he kept writing, imploring her to re-instate him in her good opinion; and the reason the wretch was so anxious and urgent for this was, that *he* would have done, had the correspondence continued, to betray her whereabouts to Sir Janus, and so saved the latter the constant expense he was at to send his cast-off mistresses and other equally *reputable* characters to hunt and spy his wretched victim of a wife, and even *tamper with her existence*, as will be one day clearly proved. But Picassiette, finding that *nothing* would induce her to have anything further to do with him, it became necessary for him to hasten the *dénouement* of Sir Janus's conspiracy, which he did with an honor and good feeling quite commensurate with the rest of his conduct, by showing the private letters she had written to him to that silly, superannuated old woman, Lady Dives, more especially the one in which she had spoken of her bad heart and bad breath. Now, any one of the least good feeling, or even with the feelings of a gentlewoman, however angry and much annoyed they might have been with the writer of those letters, would have been utterly disgusted at the meanness and black ingratitude of this contemptible little reptile Picassiette; but no! in *her* they found quite congenial metal to work upon, and soon reaped the reward of their honorable conduct. Of course Lady Dives's first act was to scratch Sir Janus Allpuff's victim out of her will, which, as the former had never expected to be in it—poor, nay, almost destitute, as she was—troubled her very little; and the old lady dying a few months after, though she left her poor old faithful servants of forty and fifty years' standing totally unprovided for, though one of them had twice saved her life, the amiable Picassiette received the reward of his virtue in a legacy of some hundreds, and the equally admirable Mr. George Beaucherche of *his*, in some thousands, which, considering the five-and-thirty years he had passed in indefatigably toadying every old woman with money, either matrimonially or otherwise, was not too much as the recompense of his labour, to which those of Hercules must have been a

jest. But though Picassiette was now paid off, Sir Janus Allpuff had other irons in the fire. I am not aware, even from the insight I have had into the Sodom and Gomorrah of the literary world, that it is customary for reviewers (?) previous to reviewing a work, to write *anonymous* letters to the author, stating that theirs was rather an influential Review, but that before they reviewed her last work, they must first assure her that the world did not care one straw whether she was well used or ill used, but *they* (the reviewer, mind, and the writer of the *anonymous* letters, for there were two,) wished to know was it possible that she meant Mr. ———, one of the characters in the novel, for her own husband?—as though they should ask, ‘Is it possible you have dared to blaspheme your God!’* though, indeed, among *that* class of notoriously infamous and profligate men, who have left *no* law of GOD unviolated, HUSBANDS, of course, are generally given precedence to the Almighty in the awe and reverence such men endeavour to inculcate in the female slaves of Great Britain. Now, with regard to that, the authoress had only to say ‘that it was impossible to write a novel without having bad characters in it, and it would be equally impossible to mention *any* vice or any meanness which would not be perfectly applicable, and which, therefore, might not appear *personal*, to Sir Janus Allpuff, who, having taken high degrees in them *all*, was at perfect liberty to take his choice, and fit them on as he pleased; and as for the sacredness of the mere word *husband*, as to *her* it was only the synonyme of the most extreme personal violence and brutality, terminating in being turned out of her home to make way for her legal tyrant’s mistresses, and to having had one child destroyed physically and the other morally, being swindled out of every shilling, and hunted by a relentless fiend through the world, it could not be very SACRED, *quoique sacré*, to her.’ ‘Oh, but respect to her position,’ said conventionality; *he* had not left *her any* save one of honest superiority, which, as it arose from herself, it was not in *his* nor in his myrmidons’ power to deprive her of. Then what *was* she to respect? Surely *not* the iniquitous laws that allowed a woman to be so treated, nor the vicious and immoral society which tolerates such conduct; and least of all the opinion of a certain obsequious clique of the press, which panders to, puffs, and protects such infamy. The silliest thing that ever tyrant did is to leave his slave *nothing* to lose, to hope, or to fear, for *then* comes the reaction; the pigmy springs into an armed giant, and the trampled worm is, *for the*

* In one of Tillotson’s Sermons the following passage occurs:—“If men fancy God to be an ill-natured Being armed with infinite power, one that delights in the misery and ruin of his creatures, and is ready to take all advantages against them, they may fear him; but they *will* hate him.” Now if such a case is even hypothetically presumeable with regard to the Supreme Being,—when reduced to a chronic fact with regard to a mere human being of whatsoever human authority, the inference is obvious,

sake of others, willing to become a martyr to a cause of which they have been so long a victim; and of this overreaching folly the 'clever' Sir Janus Allpuff had been guilty. 'Oh! but his talents,' simpers some Miss, to whom they, no doubt, appear, as compared with her own, *very great*; but his victim, being an exceedingly well-read woman, could not even bow down to and worship *them*, looking upon him much in the light of the ass which carried the relics, from having read the most of his works *in the authors from whom he transferred them*; and, moreover, having more original ideas in her own head than *he* ever purloined from anybody else's. So, finding there was nothing to be done with a wretch of this kind, and that he could not even hunt her to death, it was necessary to make the clique set up a hue-and-cry about the *personality* of her books; but *who* more personal, pray, without the excuse of gross outrage that *she* has had, than Sir Janus himself, even to formerly ridiculing the *Assinæum* and others of his now obedient vassals, to say nothing of his converting Her Majesty's ministry into highwaymen? Who more personal, either, than his friend Mr. Jericho Jabber, in his Caucasian romances? And *who so* personal, without any regard to *vraisemblance* much less to *truth*, as my Lady Gorgon, in her trashy productions? But because *she* has made her house *convenient* to the English aristocracy for the last quarter of a century she has a pension of three hundred a year, while poor Haydon starved on an under-footman's wages of twenty-five pounds—shame! shame! But Sir Janus had not done with his victim yet. *The New Quarterly; The Literary Gazette*, in old Silenus Jerdan's most unscrupulous strain, so that his reminiscences seemed to hiccup through every line; *The Assinæum* and, in short, *all* Sir Janus's *special tools* and literary bravoes—

· 'Cursed by the goose's and the critic's quill.'

were ordered to affect to treat her book as the production of a mad-woman. Nay more, Bob Clapper, another star of this galaxy, and *quite worthy of being one*, considering that he lives with another man's wife and is always drunk, was also set to *bell* all over London that Sir Janus's victim was mad, which really was very unfair towards Fudgester, as they had just concocted a job appointment for him, and inducted him into it, under the very appropriate title of Purveyor of Lunatics to the Literary Fund. But if Sir Janus had only had the goodness, instead of *saying* and setting his gang to say all this, to *have instituted a medical inquiry, or any other inquiry*, that could have his wife's conduct *AND HIS OWN* examined into, *thoroughly sifted and brought before the public*, she would have been, and still would be, *infinitely obliged to him*. But no! the calumnies of this most loathsome and utterly contemptible *clique*, like their *charities* (?) are upon the principle of *publicity* and *self-security*. With regard to the former, they stab in the back and in

the dark ; with regard to the latter—*via The Times*—they dip their hands into other people's pockets ; and no matter, as far as Sir Janus Allpuff is concerned, if his victim wife has been hunted down to the lowest straits of pecuniary-destitution, as long as *his* name figures in £100 subscriptions for restoring churches, or any other sound-of-trumpet doings, he will still have the Reverend Incumbent of any living in *his* gift, swearing that he is a reformed character !! and Fudgester endeavouring to demonstrate to the British public, by dint of brass and ink, that what *might* have the appearance of a barefaced plagiarist in others, is the highest proof and evidence of profound *originality* in Sir Janus Allpuff, and that so any '*generous*' critic must admit ; and certainly it is very easy for critics *à la* Fudgester to *be* generous with *other people's property*, and there is no generosity in giving people what they *don't* want ; so Fudgester is quite right, to give *his* friends as much honor, originality, and generosity, as he possibly can. But it was not to be supposed that the clever Sir Janus, with such a *corps d'esprit* (?) at his command, would let his victim rest ; so he next sets a fellow, calling himself a theatrical manager (?), of the name of 'Leyton,' to write to her, demanding permission to dramatise one of her novels. Now the motive of this was two-fold : first, it inculcated the rare jest of leading the poor, struggling, financially-crippled wife to suppose that she was about to get a little money, which would be a great God-send to her, considering the terrible embarrassments his ceaseless conspiracies had entailed on her ; and next, it established a *correspondence*, under the pretext of arranging the scenes and condensing the plot of the play, which correspondence was drawled out over the space of several months, which of course kept Sir Janus perfectly in possession of his victim's whereabouts. But at length even such a very bungling plotter as this very '*clever*' man felt the hum of the play could not last for ever ; consequently the plot began to thicken, and the *soi-disant* Mr. Leyton was sent with a woman who had every appearance of being a street-walker, in *person*, and under the name of Barnes.* This phase of the plot consisted in getting into the same house as Sir Janus's victim, and giving her the trouble and expense of getting out of it ; and at a later period of the plot, this low fellow Barnes wrote her a most infamous letter, the handwriting of which was *precisely the same* as

* As, according to our charming and equitable laws, "the greater the truth the greater the libel," the author of this work would be only too glad if this Barnes *alias* Leyton, *alias* strolling-player, and always *apud* would bring an action against her, that she might get his infamous employer thoroughly unmasked with all his infamous literary gang in a Court of Justice ; as she has *heaps* of documents and shoals of witnesses to establish the rest of this disgraceful conspiracy, in which the women "*Pyke*" and "*Getting*" were concerned. And *public exposure* is the *only safeguard* against such utter blackguardism and cowardly ruffianism as their vile employer has had recourse to. As the case is unparalleled, so must the

the letters of the *soi-disant* Leyton. But as Sir Janus Allpuff invariably adopts the opposite *verbal* virtue to the particular vice he may be at the moment practising, about this time he was seized in the House of Commons with such a 'generous' (a favorite word of his) horror of the under-hand and the anonymous, that he would like to have every article in a newspaper signed with the writer's name! But surely he must have uttered this *fanfaronnade* under the full conviction that such an absurd law never would or could be passed; for, otherwise, what dreadfully high wages some of his doers of dirty work would require for some of the paragraphs, *pro* and *con*, which they are ordered to indite!—Shocking to think of!—for it almost makes one see in one's 'mind's eye' Sir Janus *himself* reduced to such a state of pecuniary destitution as not to have even sufficient to pay for a raspberry puff, much less for a literary one! Thus hunted out of the miserable and remote village in which she had taken refuge, Sir Janus's victim left it, not letting any one know the place she was going to, which so exasperated her tyrant to think that she should, even for a week, a day or an hour, escape from his persecutions, that the next time the miserable pittance he doles out to her became due, and from which he even deducts the Income Tax! he positively refused to pay it to one of her solicitors till he had a *clergyman's certificate*, from the place where she then was, guaranteeing that she was alive!—and this he no doubt thought a very 'clever' way of finding out where she was. But honesty is always not only braver, but shrewder, than rascality, not only because it has nothing to fear, but because *all* resources are within its grasp; and as his victim was determined not to yield to this disgusting, though at the same time too ridiculous, piece of petty tyranny,—a very clever lawyer of hers, and one as honest as he is clever, soon brought that contemptible wretch Sir Janus, and his rascally attorney to their senses, by writing them word what he would do if the disgraceful swindle which he calls an allowance was not instantly paid. Of course he soon hunted out his victim again, but his spy (every one now being forewarned) was sent about her business in a manner that must have rather surprised her and 'her gifted' employer; and as now there is a talk of a general election, with what he himself and Fudgester would call those 'high and generous instincts' for his own safety which never quit him, I suppose he will keep quiet for some little time; and he *had better!*"

"What a contemptible, dastardly set of blackguards, to be sure!"

"You'd say so, Sir, if you knew as much of them as I do."

"Egad! I think you've told me quite enough. How old is this Sir Janus Allpuff, and what sort of a looking fellow is he?"

"Well, Sir, in years, I don't believe he is much more than fifty, but from the horrible life he has led he looks eighty; however, in the puffs, of course all this is attributed to his literary labours.

His person is not so easy to describe; it is the head of a goat on the body of a grasshopper. But it's the expression of his face that is so horrible; the lines in it make it look like an intersected map of vice, bounded on one side by the Black Sea of Hypocrisy, and on the other by the Falsehood Mountains. But I owe you many apologies, Sir, for having detained you telling you such a long history; but whenever I think of those wretches my indignation gets the better of my discretion, and on I go."

"I don't wonder at it, and I assure you *my* indignation quite kept pace with yours," said Mr. Phippen; "but tell me, do I clearly understand that you have now *no* literary employment?"

"I have no employment of any sort, Sir, and though I am sorry to hang about my father's house doing nothing, I'd rather starve than do the literary dirty work that was expected from me. What I should prefer being is a tutor, as I was educated chiefly abroad, and, therefore, write and speak French and German as well as I do English; Latin of course, but I am sorry to say I'm not a very good Grecian."

"Gad! it's odd enough, but when I first saw you I took you for a tutor." And Mr. Phippen's eye twinkled as he recalled the remainder of his thoughts on that occasion.

"I wish, Sir, you *would* take me for a tutor," smiled the young man; and for the first time Mr. Phippen remarked that he had very handsome, intelligent, dark eyes, and altogether would not be by any means ill-looking, if he could get rid of that damp disconsolate look—"But, ah! poor fellow," thought he, "having been connected with that d——d paper has made him like it; for newspapers are always damp and uncomfortable, when first they issue from the press, till they are aired. Well, I must see if I can't air this poor young fellow a little; he deserves a helping hand for his honesty." So mused Mr. Phippen, and thus he spoke—

"Well, I don't exactly want a tutor, for, 'egad! I'm rather too old for that, and I haven't any youngsters; but I'll tell you what I *do* want, which is what they call a foreign correspondent—that is, a clerk who can write French and German letters; and as you can do that, if you like to do it for me, there's a hundred a year at your service, and a half-holiday Thursdays and Saturdays, and a whole one on Sundays of course, and my name is Phillip Phippen, of No. —, Threadneedle-street."

"Oh! Sir, *do* you really mean it?" asked both father and son in the same breath.

"I always mean what I say; so if the proposition suits you, you may consider the affair concluded, and be at my office, at No. —, Threadneedle-street, at nine o'clock next Monday morning, the day before this day week, unless you prefer a longer time."

"Oh, no, Sir! *sooner* if you wish it, at any time is equally convenient to me; and I am sure I cannot sufficiently thank you."

"Pooh! Pooh! we'll talk about that this day twelvemonth.* I should like to see the word *obligation* erased from every dictionary, for this is, or rather ought to be, as I am afraid it *is not*, a world of give and take; and if mankind were not short-sighted fools so it would be, for sharing our burdens always diminishes them, while sharing our joys adds to them. Moreover, like begets like, as poverty poverty, and wealth wealth; and depend upon it, young man, by sowing good offices we reap them. You refused to join a set of human blood-hounds in a woman-hunt, and to help the strong to set upon the weak; and lo! the genius of mischief inspires me to ring your father's alarm-bell one fine May-day, and Providence sends me to give *you* a helping hand up into my office-desk. But considering that I only walked in here to ask the way to Hazeltree Cottage I must now be off, so have the goodness to let me know what I am in your debt, Mr. Levens?"

"In *mine*, Sir, absolutely nothing; though I'm sure we are *all* much in *yours*," protested the landlord.

"No, no; 'gad zooks! that will never do. First to come and set your house on fire pantomimically, and then drink up all the Mecklenburgh Masonic Lodge sherry without paying for it," said Mr. Phippen, taking out his purse.

"No, no, sir; you really *must* excuse me. I'm sure in your very handsome present to Mrs. Levens, and your kindness to my son, you've paid for the wine over and over again; and I'm only too glad that I happened to have a bottle that I knew to be really *good* to offer you."

Some men are like some stuffs, which have a beautiful gloss on one side, but are hideous on the other, which is often the case with your merely conventionally well-bred persons. But this was *not* the case with Phillip Phippen; there was not much external gloss about him, for, like his own fire-proof iron safe, he was clumsy and solid in appearance; but, oh! what sterling and untold wealth there was *within*! And, drawing upon that inexhaustible source, he no longer tried to prevent the landlord doing what he felt *was* a little gratification to him, and no courtier could have said with a better grace—

"Well, I thank you sincerely Mr. Levens, for your hospitality, and I must trespass on your kindness still further by requesting you to have the goodness to direct me to Hazeltree Cottage."

"If you will allow me, Sir, I shall have great pleasure in showing you the way," said young Levens.

"Much *obliged* to you; that will be better, and prevent my running about the country playing the incendiary any more—Ha! ha! ha! You won't forget the 29th of May in a hurry, Mr. Levens—not the restoration, but the conflagration!"

"Rather say, Sir," bowed Mr. Levens, "the obligation we shall ever feel under to you."

And having again, as he passed the bar, apologised to Mrs.

Leyens and her cap for the panic he had occasioned them, Mr. Phippen set forward for Hazeltree Cottage, escorted by Tom Levens; Mr. Levens *père* having said to him *sotto voce*, while the latter went for his hat—

“You are not surprised *now*, Sir, at my son’s disgust to the literary line?”

“Surprised! ’egad! no; so far from it that I only wonder, after having been among such beasts, he did not change your sign from ‘The Four Alls’ to ‘The All-fours.’”

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT WOULD MR. SEDGEMORE THINK?

“ALLOW me, Sir, to carry that basket for you,” said Tom Levens, as they turned down a lane to the right, leading from “The Four Alls.”

“Much *obleeged* to you, but I prefer carrying it. I like the look and smell of the leaves, ’tis like walking through a vineyard.”

“Well! its live and learn,” said Mr. Phippen, as they walked along. “’Gad! I can’t help thinking of the pretty tissue of black-guardism you have revealed to me to-day, as practised by *some* of our legislators and literati; it is only another convincing proof that the sense to conduct sense is worth every other part of it, for great abilities are much more frequently possessed than properly applied. But no wonder we have so many wickedly crooked laws, when we have such a set of precious scoundrels for senators and censors, making fine speeches and writing fine paragraphs in the midst of so much practical iniquity. It is disgusting, upon my life!”

“Why, yes, Sir,” responded his companion; “the present every-man-for-himself or devil-take-the-hindmost system is not much like Burke’s idea of politics, who said, as far as he understood them, they were but an enlarged morality; but *our* politico-literary *illuminati* have converted modern politics into nothing but an enlarged swindle.”

“Very like it, ’pon my life; and this exclusive eye to number one, and the mania these fellows have for lecturing about the country, all for notoriety’s sake—as if most of them were not quite notorious enough already—reminds me of a one act farce called ‘The School for Eloquence,’ I once saw when I was a boy. I recollect when the curtain drew up it discovered a debating society (it would *now* be a Mechanics’ Institute) with the Moderator seated in his chair; and, after an exordium from him, showing in terms of poignant irony, the *real* basis of all such assemblies, the inspired members of which usually, on a sudden, rise and decide with infinite

ease upon questions so knotty and abstruse that they would at least require long and serious deliberation, and indeed could not, unless the speakers had supernatural faculties, be rationally or conscientiously determined on otherwise. The question for the night was then read, and was—

‘IS ORATORY OF USE TO SOCIETY?’

The speakers were the original proposers of the question. To wit, a Scotchman, an Irishman, a fop, a character in a mask, a Frenchman, a Welshman, and a town buck, as they were called at that time. The first, by his speech, served as a satire upon those who mistake an aggregation of high sounding words and turgid phrases for eloquence and sublime ideas; the second adduced a proof of the use and importance of oratory, by stating that his own cousin was a *White Boy*, and proved his *patriotism by levelling all inclosures* in the neighbourhood in which he lived; till at length, obliged to quit his native soil, he came to England, and being reduced to necessity, was advised to work; but, in order to avoid doing anything unbecoming a *jauntleman*, he assumed the crape, and rode for his health on the high-way, till the *uncivil* officers of justice seized him, and he was thrice brought to trial, but each time escaped conviction by *bothering* the jury and producing an ellipsis in the evidence by bribery. Hence, the Irishman concludes that, as saving life when forfeited to the gallows is the most important of all possible results, his cousin's good fortune was an unanswerable proof of the use of oratory to society; whereupon the Scotchman condemns the Irishman's argument, and says that oratory so used is a prostitution of a fine art, for the base purpose of rescuing a scoundrel from the gallows; and *he* contends in affirmative of the question, that oratory is properly used in bestowing panegyric upon a man's patrons, and procuring good appointments. The fop asserts that its chief use is to enable a man to be well with the ladies. The masked speaker ridicules all that has been said, as proving more than enough in favour of oratory; while the Frenchman maintains that the whole art of oratory depends on grace and manner, they being to speaking what time and expression are to music; and as an inverse corroboration of his argument, gives some most ludicrous imitations of the awkwardness and absurd gestures of some of our speakers in St. Stephen's. The Welshman is an advocate for oratory because it may be well employed in doing honor to a man's pedigree. The buck laughs at oratory as a false art, serving only to mislead mankind, and confound right and wrong, and lays down his oratorical theory with this syllogism: ‘If any man contradicts me, I say *‘you lie,’* and that's my *major*; if he dares meet that, I blow out his brains—that's my *minor*; and then who dare dispute the *conclusion*?’ After which, as well as I remember, the farce concludes with a *patriotic* riot, each man contending that every one is wrong but himself.”

“Well, indeed, Sir, allowing for the difference of subject, and

the one being a ridiculous fiction, and the other a ridiculous reality, we are acting *off* the stage pretty much the same farce *now*; only, unfortunately, it is not restricted to *ONE* act. But *here* we are, within fifty yards of Hazeltree Cottage," added young Levens, suddenly stopping and pointing to a small old-fashioned ivy-covered tenement that stood in a sort of lawned garden; "*that* is it, Sir, so now I wish you good afternoon."

Mr. Phippen, who was a pretty shrewd observer of character in his way, that is, when he thought it worth his while to observe it, was pleased with this little trait of his new clerk's not accompanying him quite up to the house; "For," said he to himself, "a pushing, vulgar-minded fellow would have done so, and, moreover, have lingered on to find out what the deuce was taking me there, and all about it. I'm sure Sedgemore would, for one. 'Egad! I begin to take an interest in this young man,'" and to shew that he did so, after Tom Levens had taken off his hat, wished him good bye, and was retracing his steps home, Mr. Phippen called after him—

"Tzit! ho! Mr. Levens!"

"Did you call, Sir?" said the other, returning.

"Yes! Do you know, I think we have both done a very foolish thing, in entering into such a sudden engagement, for *you* know nothing about me, and I know nothing about you, except that I greatly approve your conduct in not doing dirty work for that d——d literary gang."

"Oh, Sir!" interrupted the young man, "I'm sure *I'm* very safe in engaging myself to you, and I hope *you'll* have no cause to repent of your kindness in having taken me; for, however humble my abilities may be, at all events you shall have no fault to find with my zeal and fidelity, Sir."

"It's not that,—it's not that. I'm sure that will be all right;—but habits, you know,—habits, Tom. Your name *is* Tom, isn't it?"

"It is, Sir."

"Well, Tom," said Mr. Phippen, laying his hand upon the young man's wrist, so as to make up by the kindness of his manner for anything that might have appeared offensive in the doubt implied by the advice he was going to give, "it's your father's calling, and the temptation which it may have put in your way, which a *little* alarms me. Now, I don't mind your taking a few glasses of wine in *company*;—it cheers, enlivens, and promotes mirth and spirit in conversation—nay, for that matter, if you *can* bear it, Tom, I don't so much mind *this* bottle or *that* bottle; but, as you value your own respectability and my friendship, *beware of the other bottle!*—for 'tis *t'other* bottle that always makes us drunk, quarrelsome, stupid, stay out late, keep bad company, have bad headaches, and think more of soda-water than of Sunday; so if ever you *had* any acquaintance with it, the first thing you must

do, before coming to me, is to break with *that other bottle*, if you can do so, without *cracking it*.”*

“I do assure you, Sir,” smiled the young man, “I *never had* any acquaintance with it, and, indeed, I don’t know when I have taken so much wine as I did in your presence to-day, for though I fear the proverb of no one worse shod than the shoe-maker’s wife, cannot be generally parodied into, no one worse beveraged than the vintner’s son, yet in *my* case it happens to be so, for having a tendency to consumption, I have been forbidden by the medical men to take either wine or spirits.”

“Come, that’s all right then, though I’m sorry for the cause; but who knows, if all goes on well, and the air of Threadneedle-street don’t agree with you, though—’egad! it’s reckoned the best in the world for the *chest*—ha! ha! ha!—perhaps I may be having occasion to send you out to Malaga or to the Mediterranean. Well now good day—good day—and at nine next Monday; and if I should not be in the office so soon, you’ll find my other clerk there, Mr. Sedgemore, and your acquaintance will begin well, with *deeds* not words;” and, with another little chuckle Mr. Phippen proceeded to the gate of Hazeltree Cottage.

“Ah!” thought Tom Levens as he wended his way home, “if we had but a dozen such honest fellows as that in Parliament!”

But Mr. Levens was wrong; for Phillip Phippen would *not* have done for a member of Parliament in the present day. He might have been a cipher in the House, but he would have never made a figure, for there was too great an anticlaptrapativeness in his whole nature, if one may coin a word;—and we don’t see why one may not, provided one does it according to the rule laid down by Demetrius Phalerus, who requires that in coining a new word that first, it be perspicuous, and next, that it be in the tone of the language that we may not, as he terms it, introduce among Grecian vocables words that sound like Phrygian or Scythian; and *cæteris paribus*, as claptrap, the *thing* is most essentially Parliamentary in the year 1856, surely the compound explicative of ANTICLAPTRAPATIVENESS may be allowed.

When Mr. Phippen reached the little black garden gate of Hazeltree Cottage (a regular cottage gate, composed of some half-dozen perpendicular bars, with a long bar, for solidity’s sake, going diagonally across the whole), he found that it opened inwards, as there were four steps to go down into the garden—if such it could be called, seeing that it consisted of two square grass-plots, intersected by a flagged walk, with a large mulberry tree in the centre of one plot, and a standard greengage tree, more

* The author begs the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s acknowledgment of the restitution of this joke about “*the other bottle*,” which is neither Mr. Phippen’s, nor belonging to any one in the locality of Fleet Street, as it first saw the light in a very old periodical, called *The Indicator*, which died a natural death some fifty years ago.

productive than ornamental, in the centre of the other ; while at the further end stood the cottage, an old-fashioned, two-storied house, roofed with heart-shaped tiles, which were nearly covered—the chimneys being quite so—with ivy ; while a vine shaded all the lower windows, underneath which the air was made balmy, with double-stocks, cabbage-roses, mignonette, clove-pinks, wall-flowers, pansies, and the usual treasures of a cottage *parterre*. A glass door opened from the sitting-room, through which it was easy to see a vista, terminating in another glass-door opening into a *real* garden—that is, an old-fashioned cottage garden, without the slightest pretensions to taste or laying out, and containing far more fruit and vegetables than flowers, and even what few there were of the latter seemed to be scrambling hard for the little earth they could get among the peas and cabbages ; but still they struggled on and out with unabated sweetness and luxuriance, totally regardless of the supercilious air with which many a portly burgomaster-looking quince and pear tree looked down upon them. When Mr. Phippen had proceeded half-way up the flagged walk, he deposited his basket of fruit on the grass, and, leaning the knuckles of both hands on his hips, with the palms turned outwards, he stood still, and took a survey of the house.

“ Well, come,” said he aloud, “ I don’t at all dislike this ; it is really a cottage, and a good, substantial, old-fashioned one too, fresh and airy, with a plentiful springy foliage all over the house, to catch every stray breeze and sunbeam that passes, on the distribution-of-labour plan of making them contribute their quota towards keeping the place cheerful.” And, taking up his basket, he walked on and into the parlour to which the glass door belonged without meeting a soul.

“ ‘Gad ! it’s funny too ; but it seems the fashion in this part of the world for people to get out of the way, and to leave their houses to take care of themselves.”

And putting down his basket in a window seat,—for like all old-fashioned houses of that date (the time of George the Second), this room had window seats, and the window panes were small, in very thick solid frames, rounded or fan-shaped at the top,—having disencumbered himself of his package, he opened his glasses and took a survey of the room, the mantel-piece of which was high and carved into a pointed arch in the centre ; on either side of it was a circular china closet, with glass doors, fan-shaped and set in heavy frames like the windows ; the walls were ornamented with portrait-prints, in plain black frames, of Mrs. Abinger, Mrs. Cibber, Miss Pope, Miss Farren (Lady Derby), as Lady Teazel ; Mr. Garrick in Abel Drugger, and Mr. Foote as Sir Charles Easy, in *The Careless Husband*. On an old fashioned card-table, folded up, between the window and the glass door by which Mr. Phippen had entered, were a large Bible and Prayer Book, *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, and Nelson’s *Festivals and Fasts* ; while by the side of the

opposite half-open glass door was a round mahogany three-legged table, with a fluted border round it, like those old wooden salvers of the same date. On this table was a quantity of plain work, with a thimble and pair of scissors thrown upon it, as if the sempstress had just quitted it. There was a wainscoted and high surbase round the room, the wainscot in compartments, like a window frame, and, though it had originally been very good oak, some Goth of a recent tenant had painted it white. Along this wainscot, in perpendicular array, like a brigade of heavy dragoons, were ranged a row of ponderous, horse hair, high, square, mahogany-backed, lion-pawed, Johnsonian-looking chairs, like those in Church-street. But the window curtains were of a lively old-fashioned chintz, of large bunches of carnations on a white ground, which had been washed till all the gloss, though not the brightness, of their colours had fled, and these drew up and down by pulleys from the side, the runners forming the draperies when they were raised. The carpet was a Brussels, considerably the worse for wear, of a large stiff octagon pattern, intersected with equally stiff wreaths and bouquets of apocryphal flowers, of which the pinks were very blue, and the blues very pink or amaranthine, while the greens and yellows seemed also, by mutual consent, to have changed colours. In the centre of the room was an oval table, with a snow-white cloth upon it, at one side of which figured a cold neck of roast lamb, and beside it a salad-bowl filled with undressed lettuces, crisp and fresh as possible; and on a plate beside it were a blushing, tender-looking beetroot, a cucumber, a few shives, four hard eggs, a jug of thick cream, and a bottle of Tarragon vinegar, with powdered sugar, and pepper and salt, ranged, like a guard of honor round them all, ready for dressing the salad; while at the other end of the table was one of those old-fashioned round wooden tea-trays, with a fluted salver border, upon which were ranged tea-cups and saucers; and filling up the rest of the table were different kinds of bread, from the substantial brown and white home-made to the more artificial fancy achievements of the baker's shop, and some delicious fresh-looking butter, taking a cold bath in a bright glass butter cooler; and divers marmalades, one more tempting than the other, seemed to be whispering sweet things to the different *Fornarinas*, in the shape of bread, around them.

"Well, 'pon my life!" said Mr. Phippen, taking up one of the tea-cups and examining it, "this looks very comfortable. I'm very glad I did not dine in town. 'Egad! one could eat one's grandfather with that salad, as they used to say about the *sauce Robert*, when I was a youngster, in Paris; and this *chaney* I like prodigiously!—it's so cosy, gay, and clean-looking."

And Mr. Phippen was quite right; for the cups were old Chelsea, fluted, the white ground looking rich and creamy, like well-made blancmange, while a pretty border of heath ran round them.

"But where can they all be? Not even that rascal Tim to meet me! 'Gad! I'll ring, but *not* the fire-bell, though!—hā! ha! ha!" And no sooner said than done: Mr. Phippen *did* ring, and was proceeding, according to his old-established custom, to follow up the summons by going into the passage and screaming out "Sârah Nash!" when he suddenly checked himself, saying—

"No, 'Gad! I mustn't call, neither; I may disturb the poor old lady."

So he proceeded on a quiet voyage of discovery into the passage, spreading out his hands before him, although it was broad daylight, as he had been wont to do some five-and-forty years back, when pursuing at Christmas the contagious—that is to say, catching—game of blind-man's-buff. At length, at the end of the by no means over large or over long passage, he came to a cream-coloured door, with a latch to it, which he justly concluded belonged to the kitchen; so knocking at it, without, however, awaiting the result of his appeal, he pressed down the latch and opened it, when he beheld *Sârah Nash* very busy ironing what, had he been a *pater-familias*, he would have known to be a woman's nightcap, but not being one, we have much pleasure in stating that he had not even a suspicion of what it was, any more than Tim, who sat blinking in the window seat opposite Sarah, with his back up, forming an imitation of a little Alp, and to the full as good a one as Mr. Albert Smith's common-place puppet-show is of Mont Blanc, except that the *furs* of this one were much the most natural of the two.

"Why lawr! Mr. Phippen, Sir, that's never you, to be sure, come at last?" cried Sarah, pounding down the iron on its stand, as if it had burnt her, while Tim made but one bound from the window seat, and ran mewing over to the new arrival, and rubbing his head against his ankles.

"And why not, pray, Sârah Nash? Who else do you think it is? But where is Mrs. Chatterton? And how is the old lady?"

"Well, Sir, I think, of anythink, she's a little better to-day; but lawz, Sir, we've been expecting on you ever since four o'clock, and Mrs Chatterton was so frightened that she put on her bonnet, and she and Master Robert are gone to Brentford to meet you, least ways to look after you, Sir, fearing as you had quite lost your way, and not knowing whether you would come by the bus or how."

"Oh! so Yellow Shanks is at home, then?"

"Yes, Sir, his mar fetched him herself early this morning a purpose to see you."

"What an idea! to suppose that a boy ought, would, could, or should, thank one for sending him to school; but I say, Sârah Nash," added Mr. Phippen, looking round at the snug cheerful little kitchen, where everything was as bright as gold, just issued from the mint, "I say,"—and here he winked his right eye and

placed his fore-finger at the right side of his nose—"better than Church Street, eh?"

"Lawr, Sir! never go for to name the 'orrid place, for the very thoughts of it sets them 'ere black *beadles*, and Mrs. Pyke, and the spiders, and strange noises a-crawling all over me, to say nothing of the rats and mice, that was worse than any *Rooshuns* ever could be."

"Mew! mew!" chimed in Tim, who evidently thought, that to deal categorically with *that* part of the question, *he* ought to rise in reply, as (*àpropos* of rats) Mr. Disraeli in another house always deems it judicious—query Jew-dish-us—to speak after Lord Palmerston.

"So, ho! Tim, my fine fellow; see if I haven't brought you wherewithal to win the heart of every tabby for ten miles round; at all events, to bear the bell in spite of them." And Mr. Phippen drew the red morocco collar from his pocket, and shook its little chime of fairy-like bells before the dazzled eyes of the admiring Sarah, who exclaimed, in a perfect ecstasy—

"Well, that *is* beautiful! to be sure. Oh! bless his heart," added she, seizing Tim, and hugging him previous to having a collar-day, and investing him with the Order of the Great Grimalkin.

"Oh! Sir, 'ave you heard from the lady lately—I mean Mrs. Pemble, Sir?" asked Sarah, while adjusting Tim's finery.

"Yes; I had a letter from her last week, and she was quite well, and I think if this horrid war was only over, and that youngster of her's safe home, there would be money bid for her yet. 'Pon my life! that strip of red against the black is very becoming," said Mr. Phippen as he admiringly watched the progress of Tim's investment. "Why, you look as smart, Tim, as if you were going to a 'dignity ball' in the West Indies."

But Tim raised a dissentient paw, and, no doubt, from his innate modesty, appeared exceedingly averse from having "greatness thrust upon him," and so made an abortive effort to collar the collar.

"Egad!" said Mr. Phippen, again looking round, and feeling that he was "monarch of all he surveyed," "considering it was a pig in a poke, and that I took this place from an advertisement, I don't think it so bad; but do Mrs. Chatterton and her mother like it? because, if they don't, it's easy to look out for something else, as I only took it for six months certain."

"Like it, Sir!" echoed Sarah, as if horrified at the heresy of such a question, "they say they never was so happy in their lives, that they are only too happy, and cannot believe they *are* alive, or, leastways, still in *this* here world to *be* so happy. And as for the old lady she's always a-saying, in spite of her rheumaticks, that if it was only to prevent your little finger a-aching, Sir, she's *sure* she could, or at least she *would*, walk to Jerusalem and back *agin* ;

and Mrs. Chatterton, *she* sets to and cries every time your name's mentioned, and tells Master Robert as he never *ort* hever to play at marbles without fust a-kneeling down and praying God to bless you, Sir; and it's only t'other day as——"

"Come, come, Sarah Nash," interrupted Mr. Phippen, "'Evil communications corrupt good manners;' and I'm afraid, since I have drafted you off into the country, you have been associating too much with jackdaws and magpies, and have to follow suit and chatter like them, while I'm as hungry as a hawk, and should like prodigiously to pounce upon that nice cold lamb I saw in the next room." And so saying, he walked out of the kitchen, followed by Sarah and Tim, the former begging of him to sit down and begin eating immediately, and not wait for Mrs. Chatterton, and Tim rubbing his head furiously against his old familiar friends the Hessians, and making loud complaints against his ornamental fetter, and ringing the changes upon every plaint he uttered. But Mr. Phippen was far too naturally well bred to commit such a solecism in the *bienséances* of life as to begin the feast before the hostess arrived; so he turned to the china-closets, and began speculating upon the fates of the past generations to whose now skeleton lips those delicate five-clawed dragon and egg-shell china cups had been raised, but more especially on the punch-bowls, which, he had no doubt, had once not only been filled with a choice spirit themselves, but had contributed to the concoction of many other choice spirits, whose racy quips and cranks still echoed, albeit somewhat more faintly and flatly, through the world.

"'Pon my life!" thought he, "punch and sack are a loss, for patriotism and sincerity seem to have gone out with them."

But as he mused, two shadows of unequal length fell across the dingy flower-show of the faded Brussels carpet; and in looking for the substance he saw a lady in weeds, accompanied by a Blue-coat boy of about ten years old, coming hastily up the flagged walk of the front garden.

"'Egad! here they are!" cried Mr. Phippen, as he went to the door to meet them. "Well, how d'ye do, my dear? Positively you look twenty years younger already for this mouthful of country air! And how are *you*, Bob? Famous things those crocus stockings, aren't they? As good as seven-leagued boots for walking home in, eh, Bob?" And Mr. Phippen winked in a scampish sort of manner, as much as to say, "This is entirely a piece of secret history between *you* and me, Bob, that your mother need not know anything about."

But while Bob smiled, blushed, shewed the dimples in both his cheeks, hung his head, and seemed to be practising a pantomimic course of tooth-drawing upon the tassel of his soup-plate cap, which he had doffed to Mr. Phippen, his mother began a speech of thanks for her happy home, and apologies for being absent on

her benefactor's arrival, but broke down at the very onset, and burst into a flood of tears.

"Well, 'egad! I suppose I *must* be angry with you for not being here when I came, on the same principle as Lady Trueman, in the old play of *The Drummer* which, I dare say, you never heard of, for it was long before your time, and, indeed, before mine, except in the way of reading;—but she says, on a similar occasion, 'How could you be so cruel as to defer giving me that joy which you knew I must receive from your presence? You have robbed my life of some minutes of happiness which ought to have been in it.' So on *that* account, and that account *only*, I have reason to reproach you. But they say men's hearts are situated exactly midway between their pockets and their stomachs, and when I look at all the good things you have provided for me, and when *you* see the appetite I have brought with me to do them justice, I think you will find there does not remain any great matter of unbalanced accounts to settle between us. Ho! Sarah Nash! don't fly off and go disappearing there among the roses, as Cerito does in the ballet, but come and cut the osier that secures this basket; for my dear," added he, turning to Mrs. Chatterton, "'I have brought your mother a few grapes and strawberries; and as for the apricots, I've no doubt Bob will be able to help us out with *them* and the oranges."

"Oh, Sir! where *will* your kindness end? So constant! so considerate! so—"

"Nonsense, my dear; make the salad, and pray let your thanks end when my dinner begins, as you value my digestion."

"Dear me! have you not dined, Sir? I wish I had known that, and you should have had something hot."

"Then you might have eaten it yourself, for had you circumnavigated the globe—as Swift said must be done, before a washerwoman can go to breakfast—you could not have got me what I liked better; for like Mrs. Siddons, if I *have* a weakness, it is for cold lamb and salad."

Mrs. Chatterton smiled, took off her bonnet and proceeded to make the salad as Mr. Phippen himself had taught her how to do; for like all persons who are *not* incomplete, and who, therefore, *have* a palate as well as an appetite, he was a little bit of a *gourmand*, though not the least of a *gourmet*, as he seldom exceeded three glasses of wine; and so he was wont to observe that the art in cooking, like art in anything else, consisted in not letting it be perceptible in *what* the art consisted. And to this we beg to append an aphorism of our own, the result of long experience and deep research, namely, that sugar, salt, and onion, the trismegistus of the culinary arcana *cana*, are when properly, that is skilfully employed as condiments to flavour, what tact is to manner; and that is an unsuspected cause of a charming result.

And now for the salad-maker. She was not pretty, though

perhaps like Sterne's Eliza, "she was something more." Three-and-thirty years of gnawing work-a-day struggles had passed over her, culminating in a great sorrow, namely, the loss of her husband, Robert Chatterton, a Bristol mechanic and a collateral descendant of the ill-fated "wondrous boy," Thomas Chatterton, inasmuch as that he was his father, the sexton of Redcliffe's, great-grand-nephew. But this great sorrow had done for Robert Chatterton's widow what moonlight does for architectural ruins, and given to her ordinary and homely features a touch of that diviner light which radiates a halo round beauty, and lends a beauty to what otherwise has none. Mr. Phippen had met with her by chance one fine, or rather one very rainy morning, that his heart was taking its constitutional ride upon his hobby; for all men have hobbies, only with a difference—as with some it is horses, with others pictures, others coins, old books, bronzes, china, and other objects of *vertu*, while with others again, it is vice successfully varnished by hypocrisy, or theoretical and verbal morality, which never deviates into the vulgar demonstrativeness of action. But Phillip Phippen's hobby differed from all these, for his was light hearts and happy faces, and his immense wealth (he being a man of few or no personal expenses) was devoted to acquiring perhaps the largest collection in Europe of these rarities, so little sought after in this utilitarian age of solemn shams and political *acrobates*; and so one morning that he was at Ludlam's, in Piccadilly, ordering some shirts and flannel waistcoats, Mrs. Chatterton came in, looking more like the shadow of one of her own threadpapers than a corporeal being of flesh and blood, and from out the mass of shabby weeds (for which Mr. Phippen had made way with as much of his old-school deferential gallantry as if they had been the bugled sables of a peeress), and in a low and humble tone there came a voice requesting to know if Mr. Ludlam was in want of "*any hands*," but, from the supercilious tone in which the shopman replied "Oh, dear no! Mr. Ludlam is over-stocked already," one would think that female Briareuses were alone employed in that establishment. So apologising, with a deep sigh, the widow walked out of the shop; but not alone, for at a short distance followed Mr. Phippen, and the rain descending in torrents about ten minutes after the chase had commenced, gave him an opportunity of stepping up to her and saying—

"Allow me, ma'am, to offer you a part of my umbrella?"

"Oh, Sir, you are very good!" blushed and stammered the astounded Mrs. Chatterton, at such unwonted courtesy in the streets of London to a half-starved mechanic's widow in shabby black; "but I have nothing on that can spoil."

"Nonsense, Ma'am! I suppose you have your lungs on, and if they are spoilt it is not so easy to repair them or to get new ones; but, I beg your pardon, the offer of my umbrella was a mere pretext. I wanted to ask you about some business of my own."

And so saying, Mr. Phippen resolutely hoisted our old friend the brown gingham, and established himself as walking-gentleman beside the widow. "The fact is, Ma'am," continued he, "I heard you inquiring just now at Ludlam's if they wanted any work done? It seems *they didn't*, but *I do*. Haven't a shirt to my back, Ma'am, or rather a back to my shirts; they all, every one of them, want something doing to them, though, 'egad! I believe the shortest way and the best plan will be to have a set of new ones at once. Eh! don't you think so, Ma'am?"—and here he looked full in her face, as if he quite expected that she should reverse the state of affairs between Sir Roger de Coverley and *his* widow, and give him, Mr. Phippen, "a whole coal mine to keep him in clean linen."

"I have no doubt, Sir," said Mrs. Chatterton modestly, "I shall be able to repair your linen if it is not too far gone;" as if she dreaded appearing *too* ambitious were she to grasp at the golden offer of making a set of new shirts.

"No, no; I've made up my mind, I'll have new ones, but I must explain to you how I like them made. There is a great deal of *talk* just now about the right man in the right place; but 'egad! as far as shirts go, there's nothing like having the right slopes, and gussets, and buttons, and all the other *gigomarees* in the right place." And with similar agreeable and technical discourse Mr. Phippen beguiled the way till they arrived at a dismal court off St. Martin's Lane, where the colour mounted up into the poor widow's pale face as she said, seeing that her companion was about to follow her up the pointed, creaking, sanded stairs that led to *her room*—

"No, Sir, if you please not; my place is *not* fit for you to come into, and it's at the very top of the house. But I'll wait upon you, Sir, at any hour if you'll tell me where; returning you a thousand thanks for employing me, and, indeed, Sir, if you knew but all, it is a charity;" and two large tears, more at her good fortune in having found employment than grief at her past want of it, rolled down her cheeks.

"Gad! I'm tired; so I hope you'll let me come up and rest a little?"

"Why, Sir, really," still hesitated the widow, "our place is *not* fit for a gentleman like you to come into; and—and—my poor mother, who is a martyr to the rheumatism, is in bed."

"Well, what of that? Do you know I'm a bit of a doctor in my way, and I dare say I shall be able to prescribe something for her that may relieve her."

Mrs. Chatterton made no further opposition, and accordingly preceded him up the creaking stairs to the very last story, amid that mosaic of unsavory odours peculiar to town poverty in its aggravated forms, from the poisonous bad tobacco of the artizan, and the vapour of his *missus's* birch-broom Bohea and molasses

sugar, down to the fainter, but by no means less offensive, atmospheric effluvia *en permanence* of cats, apples, and children.

Upon opening the door of this garret, a feeble voice from the bed, between the parentheses of a short, dry, hollow cough, said—

"Dear heart, Jenny, I thought you'd never come back; and there's Bob crying his eyes out because poor Billy is dead. But as I tell him we shall soon follow the poor bird if this goes on much longer."

And hearing the sound of loud sobs above the old woman's cough, Mr. Phippen turned his eyes to the window of this shelving room, and, sitting under it on the floor, saw a pale emaciated-looking boy, between nine and ten, with an empty bird-cage beside him, a piece of withered groundsel hanging between the bars, and a few husks of seed strewn the floor of the cage, while its late occupant lay stiff and cold on the child's lap, who, with two old match-boxes and a knife, was endeavouring to fashion a coffin for the poor little canary, whose emancipation from its narrow and gloomy prison he was lamenting so bitterly.

"Hush, mother! here is a good gentleman who is going to give me a set of shirts to make," said Mrs. Chatterton, approaching the bed, and lowering the miserable, flimsy, patched, blue curtain so as in some degree to shade the occupant of the bed from appearing in too bold relief before the visitor.

"Don't disturb yourself, my good woman," said the latter, seating himself very unceremoniously on the old rush-bottomed chair beside the bed. "I don't like that cough of yours. Not dangerous, but, like many people who may not be exactly dangerous, it's troublesome. Let me feel your pulse, and I'll see if I can't give you something to check it."

And the old woman held out her skinny hand to this new *Médecin malgré lui* with a "God bless you, Sir! I'm sure you're very good."

"Oh, dear, yes!" said Mr. Phippen, with an air of fatical importance and professional wisdom that would not have discredited the whole College of Physicians, had they been all stacked into unanimity under that ONE bay wig of his; "I think we shall soon be able to get this under." And tearing a leaf from his pocket-book, he wrote on it the only things he dared venture to prescribe medicinally, which were a bottle of syrup of squills and some Tilou lozenges, adding, as a codicil to these, "and plenty of mutton broth, with the meat in it, three times a day." Within which prescription he placed a five-pound note, and rolled it all up ready to give "*his friend the widow*," as, in his own mind, he called her, when he should go away; and his next task was to console Bob for the loss of his canary, which he did first by promising him another, which appeared only to increase the poor child's grief, by making light, as it were, of his affection for his departed friend. Finding this to be the case, Mr. Phippen changed the *venue*, and

told him how much happier the poor bird was, dead and at rest, than beating his wings against the bars of his cage in such a gloomy and un-sunned atmosphere; and then he went on to ask the boy if he thought *he* should be able to run the faster if he had stockings as yellow, aye, and for that matter, much yellower, than poor Billy's wings? And so, gradually, he began to interest the child's attention, and ultimately to inflame his imagination with the glories of becoming a member of Christ's Hospital; while, amid the grateful tears of the mother and grandmother, he elicited from them that they were fellow-townswomen of his, and at part of their narrative he became greatly excited as it became patent that they were near relations of a person who had once done him a grievous injury. Well, what of that? It was no fault of *theirs*; and even if it had been, Phillip Phippen had but one way of balancing such accounts, and that was by the Gospel double-entry of returning good for evil. But he preserved a discreet silence touching his own antecedents, merely telling these poor women that he had once been very intimate with a part of their family, and therefore that on the score of old friendship they had a *right* to his services; and shortly after he rose to depart, apparently much agitated, but promising to see them again on the following day, and pressing the *prescription* into Mrs. Chatterton's hand as he wished her good bye.

"Eh! and about the shirts, Sir?" inquired she, following him to the head of the stairs.

"Oh! ah! yes! About the shirts. Very true. I had forgotten all about them. We'll settle that to-morrow." And with another "Good day, my dear," Mr. Phippen hurried down stairs.

But before that day week Robert Chatterton was placed on the foundation of Christ's Hospital, of which Mr. Phippen was a governor; and Mrs. Chatterton and her mother removed to a nice cottage in Surrey. And this was just about the time he had intimated his intention to Mrs. Pemble of transplanting Tim and Sarah Nash, and after he *had* done so the discomforts of the lodging in Church-street having no longer any attractions for him, he took up his quarters in a more central position—namely, at the Blenheim Hotel, in Bond-street. The cottage in Surrey, however, proving, after a few months' residence, too damp for the old lady's rheumatism, he begged they would not scruple to look out for another abode, which they had the means of doing, as he had settled one hundred pounds a year on each of them for their life, and whichever died first, her hundred pounds was to revert to the survivor; for, as he was wont quaintly to express it, "If you pretend to serve people, what is the use of doling them out a piece of bread for their breakfast, and saying *if* you *want* another slice for your dinner, which of course they will, ask me for it?—which most likely they *won't*; so if you have any sincerity in your intentions it is better to give them the loaf at once, and let them help themselves as their wants arise, without saddling a fresh obligation

upon them for every additional crumb." However, finding they did *not* remove from the cottage in which he had first settled them, and which to them, indeed, appeared, by comparison, a perfect Paradise, he, seeing Hazeltree Cottage advertised and set forth very attractively in the advertisement, had taken it for them, merely sending "*Sarah Nash*" down to verify the likeness between the reality and the description, and, her report having been favourable, he immediately concluded the bargain, and his *protégées* had been now established there about three weeks; but until the present occasion, from a press of business, he had never been able to go so far to pay them a visit. And thus it was that Phillip Phippen had become acquainted with Mrs. Chatterton and her mother. No wonder, then, that Tuesday, the 29th of May, 1855, was a great day at Hazeltree Cottage, and that the sun that morning, as he peeped through its ivy-shaded windows, and through the vapour-shrouded ones of the dormitory of Christ's Hospital, woke up faces almost as beaming as his own!

Now as Mr. Phippen studiously avoided speaking to Mrs. Chatterton or her mother of their relations, which appeared to be as disagreeable a subject to them as it was to him, he often expatiated, with as much bitter indignation as if he were still suffering and perishing in the next street, upon the miserable fate of poor Thomas Chatterton. As a poet and a genius, he might, indeed, have ignored his existence; for, except Shakespear, whom, as a constant play-goer of half a century, he knew by heart and often quoted, saying "'Gad! he had felt it and seen it all, over and over again, only Shakespear expressed everything that was going on in the world within and the world without, so much better than he could;" but Chatterton, as a denizen of the vast republic of misery, not to know would have been almost like an historian being ignorant of some remarkable event or epoch in history. Moreover, this page of the past did admirably to turn to whenever Mr. Phippen wanted to ward off any grateful speeches from the present owner of that ill-fated name, upon whom poor Chatterton's mantle of misery had descended, and upon whom it might have rested for ever but for the Samaritan of Threadneedle-street.

"'Pon my life, my dear, you have improved," said Mr. Phippen, passing sentence on the salad, and hastily raising his napkin, which he always tucked through one button-hole, and drawing it across his lips, in order to do so, "for it's not like any man or woman that ever lived; and do you know why?"

"No, I do not," smiled Mrs. Chatterton, "only if it's not like you either, Sir, I'm sure it can't be good."

"Not more like me than any of the rest; for it has'n't a fault; that's what I mean."

"Then, after all, it is like you, Sir."

"Come, no flattery, if you please. It is a thing that I especially detest, and, therefore, never give or take. Besides, what do you

mean, you hussy, by comparing *me* to a salad? A salad's *green*; and 'gad, I'd have you to know that forty years passed in Thread-needle-street would take the verdure even out of an American prairie!"

Tim, who had been curled up under the table, making a pillow of one of Mr. Phippen's feet, having his attention suddenly attracted by a martlet flying out of a cherry-tree past the garden window up into one of the ivy-crowned chimneys, now made a sudden spring across the room; and, like the old lady of nursery anthology in her celebrated equestrian excursion to Banbury Cross, being provided with the means of accompanying himself with music in his progress, he, in his turn, attracted not only the attention but the admiration of the Blue-coat boy—

"Oh! mother," cried he, "just look at Tim. What a beautiful collar he's got, with bells to it and all!"

"He *is* smart indeed. Ah! Sir, you are as kind to animals as you are to human beings."

"Well, suppose I am. Nine times out of ten they deserve it better. Animals, that is, quadrupeds, are innocent excellent people, particularly dogs and donkeys. 'Gad, I suppose it's what may be called a *fellow feeling*, but I never see a donkey that my heart don't warm to it, and I should like suddenly to sprout into thistles, so as to give *them* a salad—poor, patient, innocent, put-upon things—as agreeable as the one you have given me. Strange that the two animals in the creation most honored by the Creator should be the most oppressed by man; for honored they were when Our Saviour deigned to be born of woman, and to enter Jerusalem on an ass. But had you women less of the ass in you—that is, less patience and passive endurance—we self-elected lords of the creation could *not* oppress you as we do. But people never are helped till they help themselves, nor pitied till they feel for themselves; and 'gad! as a sex, you only know how to *complain*. And until you are *unanimous* in enforcing some slight justice and protection from the legislature, instead of being split into factions of the silly and the selfish, who, not suffering *individually*, care not how much their sex may suffer collectively, you are leaving the field clear for the vicious and tyrannical of ours, in the interest of whose vices it is to keep the iniquitous laws for grinding wives as they are, and continuing to crucify women as St. Peter was crucified, *with their heads downwards*."

"Indeed, what you say is only too true, Sir; and it is this aggregate of silly selfish women who do the cause such dreadful injury, such being, for the most part, as profligate as the men. Like them, they care not how oppressive and unjust the laws may be against *them as a sex*, since *they* are in the position of smugglers, to whom the exorbitance of the excise and custom duty is nothing, since it does not affect *their* illicit dealings; on the contrary, the imposts that press so heavily upon the honest and conscientious

portion of the community is all so much additional gain to those who infringe them."

"Mother, *do* look at Tim's collar and the bells!" urged Robert Chatterton, who had succeeded in catching that gentleman, and now laid him on his mother's lap.

"Yes, beautiful indeed," said she, stroking the cat's head, who purred his thanks in a deep contralto. "It reminds me"—and her eyes filled with tears as she spoke—"of a collar an uncle of mine gave me for a cat I had when I was a little girl."

"What uncle, mother?" asked the boy.

"He's dead now."

"And where's the collar? I never saw it."

"No, I'm sorry to say I used to leave it tossing about, and at last it was stolen; and when I had lost it, I *was so* sorry!—and to this day I keep reproaching myself for not having taken more care of it."

"Ah! there it is, as Shakespear says in *Much Ado About Nothing*:

'It so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it; but, being lack'd and lost,
Why, *then* we rack the value; *then* we find
The virtue that possession would not shew us
Whilst it was ours.'

'Gad! it's wonderful how that man knew everything! I only wish he could come, like the ghost in *Hamlet*, and give us some tidings of the *other* world.'

But seeing that Mrs. Chatterton's tears now began to flow in good earnest, he added, somewhat *àpropos de bottes*—

"Do you know what I never can understand about that poor boy Chatterton?—which is, why the deuce, when his poems were so good, and would have done him such credit *as his*, that he should go and toady an old dead monk by fathering them upon him?—a fellow who, however well versed he might have been in Pasties and Hippocrass, probably knew nothing of Poetry or Hippocrene."

No wonder Mr. Phippen could *not* understand it; but doubtless poor Chatterton, with that prescience possessed, more or less, by all whose passport is made out for an early return to the realms of light, knew even in *his* day (though *then* there was no Literary Inquisition, like "the *Guilt* of Literature," for breaking on the wheel all *uncliqued* talent, or no maelstrom of milk-and-water, like its chief tool, *The New Quarterly*, ready at a moment's notice to direct "to immortality" some ultra-inane Dickens-and-ditch-water imitations, or "to the lowest *oubliette* of '*the Guilt*'" one of its predestined victims—*neither*, on that very account, being likely to reach their allotted destinations)—still, it may be fairly presumed that by intuition Chatterton knew the English world too well, more especially the literary world, not to feel that genius in a

garret had no chance, except the one amounting almost to a certainty of being kept there by the barriers of neglect at least, if not by the pikes of persecution; whereas dead men's fames clash with no living petty spites or paltry pushings, and, moreover, it looks learned, and gives room for logomachy—always a desideratum among critics (?). So poor Chatterton borrowed the monk's hood to hoodwink them, and perhaps also—who knows?—to give a plethoric air to his own starvation, and so lay a trap for bread, instead of stones—knowing how *literally*, though, albeit, somewhat profanely, the well-fed portion of the world act upon the Gospel principle, and take care that to those who have much, much shall be given, while *from* those who have nothing shall be taken even that which they seem to have.

"But one of the most melancholy things to me in that poor young fellow's fate," continued Mr. Phippen, "is the idea of the posthumous subscriptions that Southey and Cottle got up to publish his works for the benefit of his starving sister (though it was very good of *them*, I'm not saying it was not); still, when one thinks that had that poor boy had *half* even of *one* of those hundreds during *his* miserable struggle, it might have prevented its fearful termination. 'Gad! I think if I had been Mrs. Newton I *would* have starved before I could have eaten a shilling of it, for, all said and done, it *was* blood money."

"Ah! Sir, she had a daughter," was the widow's only defence of her husband's relative.

"'Gad! I forgot that; yes, I see, she couldn't help taking it, but it was a pity too."

And this was as explicit a way of owning himself vanquished as if Mr. Phippen had lowered his arms at a tournament, or said, "I give in" at a prize-fight. But in order to cover his retreat as well as possible, he added—

"Now, my dear, give me a cup of your good tea."

"No wine, Sir? You need not be afraid of it, for like all else in the house, it's your own that you gave us; and there is some very good home-brewed beer, not brewed by *us*, but I know that it is home-brewed, as we get it from a farm-house."

"Neither, thank you, for I foolishly took my allowance *before* dinner. I'm glad you don't find me 'drunk and disorderly,' for, to ask my way to this place, I turned into one of those taverns where *everything* is ordered 'to be drunk on the premises,' and therefore I suppose *everybody* is *expected* to be so too; it was up yonder, at 'The Four Alls,' Mr. Levens's—a very honest man apparently, with a pedigree as long as my arm, of psalmody, shaving, bailiffs, bassoons, free-masonry, and French horns. And, 'egad! I set the poor people's house on fire for 'em.'"

And Mr. Phippen laid down his knife and fork, and laughed till the tears came into his eyes as he recalled the *tableau* of little, fat, round Mrs. Levens, kicking and struggling in poor, long, thin Tom

Levens's arms, which was all the world, as he afterwards explained to Mrs. Chatterton, like an obstreperous and suddenly galvanized round of beef trying to free itself from the skewer that upheld it.

"Set their house on fire, Sir!" echoed the widow, looking aghast.

"No, my dear, not quite so bad as *that*; but this was the way of it," and as soon as he could sufficiently master his laughter (which, now that he was not afraid of offending any one, kept exploding every five minutes like little preliminary eruptions of Vesuvius,) he gave her the whole *scéna*, from his arrival at "The Four Alls" till his departure, also elucidating by explanatory notes Mr. Levens's pedigree, which, in his former cursory mode of merely alluding to it as a *fait accompli*, had considerably mystified her.

While they were all three laughing over this episode, and Bob more especially lamenting that he had not been there to see Mrs. Levens during her high state of excitement, when she was converting her son into a fire escape, Sarah came in with the old lady's grateful thanks to Mr. Phippen for the grapes and strawberries, and a large cup to take her up some tea.

"Sarah Nash!" said Mr. Phippen, "I hope you don't forget the Chinese way I taught you of telling what o'clock it is by the cat's eyes, for you must be sure and let me know when it wants a quarter to nine, in case I should forget to look at my watch?"

"Very well, Sir; I'll be sure to let you know."

"Mother, may I have this bit of bread for the birds? for I hear the nightingales beginning now," said Robert.

"Yes, dear."

"That's right. Good boy! Always feed the birds; and you are doubly bound to do so *now* that you are yourself a yellow-hammer."

"Oh! I've got such a pretty poem about an old man, who, when he died, left a legacy to feed the birds," said the boy, venturing to approach his benefactor, and summoning additional courage to look up in his face; for, though he loved him dearly, his mother had held him up, not only as *the* being *par excellence*, to be always first in his prayers, but she had also enlarged upon Iago's idea, with reference to Othello and himself,* and taught her son to think that that kind old man had indeed

"A daily beauty in his life,
That made all others ugly."

Nor was she far wrong; so that the child's love was tempered with a sort of awe, such as a good Catholic might feel for his patron saint.

"Have you, my boy?" said Mr. Phippen, patting his head.

* "He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly——."

"Show it to Mr. Phippen, dear. I'm sure he will be glad to see it; for it was his prize, Sir, for history and general good conduct."

And away went Bob to the farther china closet, and returned with his fine green-and-gold volume of Longfellow, and blushing up to his ears to think how he was proclaiming his own honors, he turned over the leaves until he came to that charming Legend of Wurtzburg, which Longfellow has so exquisitely versified, and pointed to the lines where Vogelweide, the minnesinger of its cathedral, dying—

—"Gave the monks his treasures;
Gave them all with this behest,
They should feed the birds at noontide,
Daily on his place of rest."

"Poor fellow!" cried Mr. Phippen, "may he rest all the better for it in his narrow bed." But when he read on to where the portly abbot put his veto against the poor little aerial choristers' heritage as wanton waste, and how they, poor pilgrims, came—

—"In vain o'er tower and turret,
From the walls and woodland nests,
When the minster bells rang noontide,
Gather'd the unwelcome guests,"

he closed the book, and, shaking it as vehemently as if it had been the utilitarian abbot's neck, said—

"Egad, Bob! I only wish we had that rascally abbot here! And if he *must* thwart and annoy the poor birds and rob them of their rights, it should be as a scarecrow; for you and I would hang him up to the highest cherry-tree we could find, wouldn't we?"

"That we would!" cried Bob, clapping his hands, in great delight at the mental panorama before him of a fat abbot dangling as a chatelaine from a cherry-tree.

"Pon my life! this seems very pretty poetry though; not that I'm a judge," said Mr. Phippen, as he again opened the volume and looked through it. "I'm surprised! for I thought the Yankees thought of nothing but

'Dimes and dollars,
Dollars and dimes;'

and that in America as in England

'An empty purse was the worst of crimes.'

'Gad, I'll buy this book.'

Bob looked eagerly at his mother. The look was as legible as his own best copper-plate hand; so that she instantly, *via* the same electric telegraph, nodded a double assent.

"Oh, Sir!" said the boy, now really redder than the cherries on

the tree from which they should like to have hung the utilitarian abbot, "if you would accept this one, I should be so glad!"

"What, my boy—your prize-book?"

"Oh, yes, Sir! I only wish it was something better or something more."

"Well, I *will* accept it, and shall value it doubly, to think that my little yellow-hammer was so good that he won Longfellow when he was only a short fellow! So that is the long and the short of it, Bob," said Mr. Phippen, as he transferred the volume to his pocket; and Bob, who thought this a rare jest, felt so buoyant that he was convinced had he only put the tips of his feet to the ground, and *willed* it, he could, as one does in a dream, have flown back to Christ's Hospital, and told all the boys in his class of the great honor that his prize-book had come to! And even Tim seemed to be thinking something of the same marvellous and magical sort, as at that moment he scratched his ear, and shook out such a peal upon his bells as must for life have deafened any stray flea then invading him; to say nothing of bells being considered all the world over, from Fairyland to Finland, as *the* most infallible mediums for adjuring or conjuring supernatural agencies. And as the twilight deepened, and the moonlight came tripping through the leaves in little fugitive rays, that seemed, as Bob said, as if they were playing at puss-in-the-corner all over the room—now here, now there, and never remaining anywhere—he grew much braver, and stood up much closer to Mr. Phippen, and even took very great liberties, in prying into *his* boyish pursuits, and making black-letter researches into the aboriginal games of leap-frog, marbles, trap-ball, snap-dragon, pegtopism, and other similar dissipations, and ultimately both felt and expressed much surprise at hearing that all and each of them had, like the Chinese people (in their own estimation), attained to perfection so many years ago, and consequently had never varied since. And so the time passed, till Sarah appeared to warn Mr. Phippen that it wanted a quarter to nine, when, with his usual punctuality, he instantly rose to depart; but the widow and her son asked leave to accompany him down the lane, as far as to where the cab was waiting for him.

"Gad! that's very good of you! and I'm sure I'm extremely obliged to you for your hospitable reception. I don't know when I've passed a pleasanter time. I'll come and see you soon again—that is, as soon as I can get away; and, do you know, I like this little, quaint, old-fashioned nook ten times better than that new, staring, brown brick affair at Esher, which, somehow or other, always gave me the idea of a red-haired man with his eye-lashes cut off. Good bye, Sarah Nash!" added he, turning to that nymph, who was opening the gate.

"Good bye, Sir; and will you *please* Sir give my duty to Mrs. Pemble when you writes?"

"Very good, that I'll do. Tim! good night, old fellow; and don't forget that—

'Fat of snails, and marrow of mice,
Make a dish that's wondrous nice,'"

sang Mr. Phippen, to Bob's infinite amusement, as the former took off his hat to Tim, who was now in Sarah's arms, and who "mewed" his adieux in return.

"Pon my life, this is delicious!" cried Mr. Phippen, stopping before they had gone twenty yards, and inhaling a long respiration of the thousand perfumes from leaf and flower that the evening air was distilling, breaking off at the same time a branch of woodbine out of the hedge, which indeed invited him to do so, by touching his cheek as he passed, and flipping a tolerable sprinkling of dew over him; and then he looked up into the clear sky, with its young crescent moon and little vibrating white clouds, through which every now and then some star would flash like a stolen glance.

"Well, it's surprising to me," said he, withdrawing his eyes from the heavens, and uttering his thoughts aloud, "that people don't take a little more trouble to get there."

"Oh, Sir! when you come down here again," said Robert Chatterton, "may I not come, too?"

"Well, I don't exactly know how *that* will be, Bob, as I cannot fix a time for coming again. Dear me, there's the cab. I'm sorry we have no farther to go; but, bless me, Bob, I was nearly committing a terrible over-sight. You know you were asking me just now about school-games and *customs* in *my* time; and there was I, very nearly forgetting *the* most time-honored and popular of them all."

"Indeed, Sir!" cried the boy, getting still closer to him, while his eyes dilated in the moonlight, thinking he was at last going to hear something new, or at least not known there, to carry back to school with him.

"Why, yes; wasn't that too bad? However, a little giddiness is excusable in young fellows like me. It is this. You must know, Bob, that in *my* time, whenever youngsters came home from school, or elders went there to see them, it was always a matter of course (and, indeed, I've been credibly informed that the custom still exists) that the said elders should give the said youngsters a tip."

And Bob laughed as, suiting the action to the word, Mr. Phippen put a nice, new, bright, double sovereign into his hand.

"Oh! no, indeed, Sir, thank you; he does not want it," said Mrs. Chatterton, "and I can give him whatever he *does* want."

"Hush, for Heaven's sake!" cried Mr. Phippen, playfully placing his hand before her mouth; "only consider if any utilitarian member for Farthingfudge, or Screwemalltight, should be going by on the top of a Turnham-green omnibus, we should have him bringing in a bill to that effect next session, entitled 'The Codgers'

Tip Protection Bill.' Well, good night; God bless you, my dear. Good bye, Bob, and mind you get as many prizes as you can. that I may continue in your good books, though, 'gad! I don't mean to rob you of them *all* as I did to-day.' And so saying, and shaking both mother and son cordially by the hand, he got into the cab, which drove off, but it had not proceeded far before the cabman pulled up suddenly.

"What's the matter?" asked his fare; but instead of answering him the man ran a little way back to some one who was calling him, but presently returned handing in a silk pocket-handkerchief.

"It's your *handkitcher* if you please, Sir, as you dropped, and your lady picked it up and was a calling arter us with it, that's all."

"*My Lady*, indeed!" echoed Mr. Phippen as he threw himself back into a corner of the cab, which now made another start, and this time an effectual one.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LITTLE GREAT WORLD OF LONDON. THE PARVENU'S DINNER. THE FINE PEOPLE MR. PHIPPEN FINDS HIMSELF AMONGST, WITHOUT BEING, IN FINE, MUCH ELATED THEREAT.

THERE is not much room for description in the costume of even the most elaborately-got-up modern *élégant*; consequently there is, of course, still less in the toilet of Mr. Phippen upon the day that he was to dine at Sir Titaniferous Thompson's; so that it may be briefly summed up as a particularly *soigné* specimen of the florid Gothic. The flowered black satin waistcoat, the "*very tasty thing*" with which he had so maliciously tried the nerves of the bran-new baronet on the previous day in Threadneedle Street, *was* in requisition, but only modestly in the back ground, under a white one of the most dazzling freshness; for, unknown to himself, Mr. Phippen was a disciple of Brummel's, and the great theory of his dress, on all occasions practically carried out, was, "plenty of clean linen, country washing, and no perfumes." Still, as he had a vague idea that the latter were *de rigueur* on great occasions, he had sent to Smith's for a half-guinea bottle of their really fragrant lavender-water, as he did not even suspect the existence of any other perfume, with the exception of attar of rose, which, like genius, is pleasant enough at a distance, but exceedingly oppressive and disagreeable when too near. And the lavender-water being opened, some of it was duly poured upon a cambric handkerchief of a curiously fine texture.

"'Pon my life, that's pleasant!" said Mr. Phippen, waving the perfumed cambric like an *oriflamme* through the room; "but not equal to the hedges in Hazeltree Lane, though."

And with this soliloquy, and the kerchief consigned to his pocket, Mr. Phippen's toilet was completed. Moreover, his carriage (for he had one—a Clarence) was at the door; but his having a carriage at all was only the result of his having an opera-box, he being passionately fond of music; and whenever he lent his box to ladies, he invariably placed his carriage at their disposal also, but with *job* horses; for, as he himself said—"What would be the use of his keeping horses? He should be always lending them, and, 'gad! the poor animals would be driven off their feet; for nothing knocked up horses like shopping, balls, concerts, reviews, horticultural fêtes, &c., &c.; it was worse than hunting, or even posting, fifty times!" And so the Clarence remained at a livery stable in Bruton Street, where they gave him very good horses when he wanted them, and also supplied him with an exceedingly respectable-looking coachman and footman, who looked as well in his quiet dark-green livery as if they were in the habit of donning it every day.

Mr. Phippen being dressed, eight o'clock having struck, and the carriage having been announced by the waiter, what did he mean by ensconcing himself in an easy chair, and setting in for "the leading article" of *The Times*? Why, to show his knowledge of some, at least, of the usages of "good society" (?)—one of which consisted in the bad manners and ill-breeding of keeping people waiting when they ask you to dinner; and so he thought he would re-assure his host that he was not *quite* such a Goth as he might think him, but could, when he chose it, be as impertinent as the best of them; so, leaving him in more agreeable and profitable society than any he is likely to meet with—to wit, the afore-said leading article—we will precede him to Hyde Park Place, and enter at once with our Asmodeus-privilege of authorship. The exterior of the house (my Lord Dunnington's, which Sir Titaniferous Thompson rented) we have already described in a former chapter. It is the received opinion, that when a woman marries she ought to approximate herself, her feelings, her tastes, her bearing, her habits—in short, her whole being—to the sphere and nature of her husband—which, like all other received opinions, makes no clause or provision for exceptional cases which occur, more or less, in all general conditions, and consequently does not recollect what a terrible abyss such an approximation and elasticity of character might plunge some women into! However, when Lady Georgiana Giraffe (*who, par parenthèse*, was one of the most common-place of the common-place) bestowed her hand and title by courtesy on Sir Titaniferous Thompson, she seemed so entirely of this opinion that she plunged so suddenly and effectually into the rôle of *nouveau riche*, that nobody ever thought of making the invidious distinction

of calling *him* a *parvenu*, but always spoke of *them* as such. *Show*, she concluded, was to wealth what faith is to religion—the evidence of things not seen; and consequently *expense*, even in defiance of taste, appeared the *one* thing aimed at throughout their establishment, as though she would have said at every turn *vid placards*, as they do in pantomimes, “*There! that’s what I married this little, ugly, vulgar, mean-looking man for!*” It was necessary, at least she thought so, in order to follow out this public and constant vindication of her marriage, that their dinners should have some much more salient points than the mere perfection of the *cuisine*, though they had one of the first *artistes* in Europe; neither was the magnificent horticultural display of the dessert *en permanence*, *à la Russe*, with the little fountains of iced and perfumed waters that played amid the flowers from the artistically-arranged *plateaux*, nor the first course being served on curiously-embossed old *cinquecento* silver plate, the second entirely on gold plate, and the third on *Capo de Monte* china, of the very rarest workmanship and designs, enough, in Lady Georgiana Thompson’s opinion (and perhaps she was right), to counterbalance the piece of very ugly common clay that she had been obliged to take into the bargain with all these gems, and yet leave the latter sufficiently in the ascendant to make her the envy of all her dear friends and acquaintance; so that, in continuation, her *own* chair, in the centre of the table, was of crimson velvet, with gilded arms, somewhat throne-shaped, and, in order to make it the more conspicuous, the screen that put on at the back was so arranged as to form a pillow, the eider-down stuffing being first covered with white satin, and then a case of Dresden lace slipped over it, frilled with *point d’Alençon*. What a pity, therefore, it would have been, if Lady Georgiana Thompson *could* have been cured of “those horrid headaches!” which compelled such a charming combination of red velvet and white lace! The *menus du dîner*, too, were like no one else’s, for they were always printed, not exactly on satin, but on satin paper, in gold letters, like a command play-bill, which was not only *tant soit peu mauvais ton*, but exceedingly annoying and mystifying to near-sighted elderly ladies and gentlemen, who would much rather have known in plain, legible black and white what they were going to have for dinner. However, amid all this display, there was one aping of regality really charming. Lady Georgiana had obtained their landlord’s (Lord Dunnington’s) leave to pull down the arch of the partition wall in the alcove where the sideboard stood, which opened into a breakfast room; this was completely filled with flowering shrubs and exotics, and *bosquets* of moss and evergreens, which concealed a Hesse Darmstadt and a regimental band, that played alternately during dinner; and as Lord Dunnington had somewhere heard, among the numerous English and foreign physicians he was always consulting for his gout, that music promotes digestion, he was too good a landlord, dined at Sir Titaniferous’s

too often, and appreciated the *tours de force* of Prignetelli, the baronet's *chef*, too scientifically, to refuse such a trifle to Lady Georgiana as the permission to pull down a party wall, or, indeed, all the walls in the house, provided the so doing did not endanger those of the kitchen and dining-room. Moreover, he claimed connection with the Thompsons on account of his discarded niece having married a disinherited defunct cousin of Sir Titaniferous, and, indeed, he would gladly have made it out *relationship*, at least on the *money* side, if he could. But as for Lady De Baskerville, he always boldly talked of *her* as his relation (!) for she was a very handsome woman, and her daughters were the most beautiful girls in London. *One* had married well, and no doubt the other would do so; and the sons were all getting on amazingly except the eldest; but then he *was* a peer, so there was no necessity for him to climb unless he liked it. Altogether it was charming to see family ties so knit as they were at Dunnington House that day, for Lady De Baskerville was truly kind in being an *habituée*, and showing her intimacy with the Thompsons. The only difference between her and her nephew was, that *he* always spoke of her as "my aunt, Lady De Baskerville," while she as invariably spoke of, or to, him as "Sir Titaniferous," which was at once more respectful and less compromising; for there is a wide difference between liking people's money, their dinners, and their position in the world, and liking themselves, or caring to be thought belonging to them if *they* have not always belonged to that position. And friendship (!) (of which the fashionable world every day furnishes the most remarkable instances) may exist independent of all esteem or regard, for the same object may be detestable to our tastes, but adorable to our interests. The mind has a surprising faculty of accommodating itself, an amazing elasticity of adaptiveness, so that by dint of habit both persons and things in themselves, either pernicious or antipathetic, cannot be dispensed with but reluctantly or with regret. Still, what a Janus is that said custom!—for while it acts as pacificator to antipathies it quite as often plays the Iago to friendships and affections. But Lady De Baskerville had shuffled her cards so well as to let the prevalent idea in society be, that it was Lady Georgiana who was *her* relation and not the *marito*; and this *ingano felice* she had achieved partly by letting judgment go by default—that is, *not* contradicting the mistake—and partly (though she was so very respectful to her nephew) by calling her niece by marriage "Georgy," or "dear Georgy," as often as it was possible to do so without being vulgarly demonstrative; and as Lady Georgiana was exceedingly plain (that large featured sort of ugliness that *won't* let people charitably pass it by), and anything but young, she by no means discouraged this fond familiarity, but quite the reverse, for however you might

"Look in her face and you'd forget it all,"

there was in the *sound* of "dear Georgy" a something that pre-supposed youth and beauty. But we must leave the dining-room, where the candelabra are beginning to be lighted, and go up stairs, which, indeed, was like walking through an avenue in the *Château des Fleurs*, so luxuriantly were they decorated with exotics; and as royalty had been expected that day, instead of the usual Axminster stair-carpets, ones of crimson velvet, bordered with miniver (worth a small German principality in themselves), had been substituted. The *portières* of the doors were also of crimson velvet, but to lighten them for summer they had an inner drapery of Honiton lace, for, as Lady Georgiana said, "one really ought to patronize one's own manufactures," and as long as they were of an equally costly description she was always ready to do so. But, alas! the course of true getting on in the world, like the course of its antipodes, true love, "never yet ran smooth," and that morning Lady Georgiana had received a note from Lady ———, announcing that their Royal Highnesses the Duchess of ——— and the Princess ——— of ——— were invited to dine at Buckingham Palace, and Sir Titaniferous also received an apology from their other great card, Lord Oaks, saying he had received a command to dine at the Palace also, so that only his son, Lord Acorn, came, and a few of the acrobats of his Lordship's political party. *Mais à tout malheur quelque chose est bon*; and this seeming disappointment was more than counterbalanced to the host by the slight nervousness he felt as to Mr. Phippen's uncourtly *franc parler* in such society, notwithstanding the pains he had taken to double-gild him, and quadruple his capital, for this occasion, which, as Sir Titaniferous was aware from his own personal experience, would have made any amount of vulgarity (had Mr. Phippen possessed it) not only tolerated, but adulated, by our *haute volée*. Besides, this absence of royalty, by leaving the baronet less pre-occupied, gave him more time to con his lady-wife's oft-repeated, and as oft-forgotten, lesson *not* to ask people to drink wine with him; *not* to ask young ladies when they would take another *ride*, meaning thereby go out in the carriage with Lady Georgiana; *not* to speak of the Princess Victoria as the Princess Royal; *not* to panegyrisé any *débutante* by saying he thought her a very *genteel* girl; *not* to issue a *bulletin* about his health, saying that Dr. Holland had forbidden him to drink champagne, as not one of the five or six-and-twenty dear friends dining with him cared one straw what state his health was in, as long as it was not altogether so bad as to prevent his giving dinners; and, above all, *not* to say that, in spite of the doctor's prohibition, he sometimes gave himself 'a treat,' and took champagne; with a hundred other *nots*, too numerous to mention. Lady De Baskerville had also her consolation in thinking that she could more exclusively devote herself to snaring that *rare avis*, old Lord Celendon, though she could not get over Florinda's folly—not to

say disobedience—in going with her brother to the Crimea; yet it was not exactly that either, as they had started from Cowes without asking her leave, and written from the Dardanelles to say what they had done; but what made the thing so terrible, in Lady De Baskerville's mind, was not only the time the silly girl was losing with Lord Celendon, who, on *his* side at least, had no time to lose, but she also feared that the beautiful Florinda, like that other misguided young creature, the Princess Arizapha, in that most entertaining of histories, "The Adventures of John of Gaunt," might "prefer the gaiety and good legs" of some subaltern out there to Lord Celendon's prosiness and gouty ones. What a pity the mother was not out there, instead of the daughter!—for, though she might not have made so many conquests, what a general she *would* have made! for no one possessed the art of giving a defeat the air of a victory like Lady De Baskerville. So when Lord Celendon had sunk down into a *bergère* beside her, and wheezed out what he meant to be a little playful *persiflage* about all being fair in love and war, but its being very *unfair* to send such a lovely creature as Lady Florinda to the seat of war, to increase the lists of the killed and wounded, with a great deal more to the same effect, equally new and equally *spirituel*—

"Ah, my dear Lord Celendon!" said the mother, lowering her voice to the *piano* of a confidential communication, ostensibly to flatter her auditor, but in reality to escape the ridicule of being heard by any one else; "few people know Flo', or have any idea of the depth of womanly devotion that there is under that smiling face of hers. She's not the least like other girls of her age. Balls and fêtes have little attraction for her; *her* sphere is in a sick room; it's *there* she shines! So gentle! so thoughtful! so indefatigable! We always call her the 'little nurse' at home; and, poor dear child! her great ambition was to go and join Miss Nightingale at Scutari."

But Lord Celendon looked as if he thought that *one* sick room and one set of dilapidated limbs were quite sufficient for a young lady of eighteen to exercise her nursing talents upon; so, quick as lightning, Lady De Baskerville deciphered the look, and perceived that, like her daughter, she had gone rather too far in going to Scutari; so she added—

"But *that* was quite out of the question, so I have written to De Baskerville to say that he *must* bring Flo' back directly."

"I think your Ladyship did right," was the old peer's laconic rejoinder.

And now the rooms began not exactly to fill, for they were too large for a mere dinner-party, however numerous to have filled them, but the guests began rapidly to arrive, and were of that heterogenous description generally to be met with in the mammon temples of *les nouveaux riches*, comprising almost every link in society's *gilt* chain, from its legitimate leaders that are courted and

manœuvred for, and the intermediate ordinary mass of pushers and climbers, down to the plebeian hangers-on, who are only permitted and suffered, but who nevertheless must not be converted into enemies by total neglect. Moreover, this being called an age of "*progress*" (?) (though the great struggle appears to be not so much to progress as to *rise*), of course Sir Titaniferous had not been long in the House of Commons without acquiring the "*dodge*" of coalescing with the literary swell-mob, seeing, by the literary-politico samples in that house, of what steam-power the puffology of a certain clique of the press is in fabricating virtues and talents for their *protégés*, and disseminating them by electric telegraph through the country, while all their vices and shortcomings (which is but natural since they are *wedded* to the latter) are kept, like their wives, snugly in the back-ground, and their existence ignored by the community at large. In fact, though by no means a brilliant man, Sir Titaniferous Thompson could not, in his parliamentary career, have attended half-a-dozen divisions upon great beer or button bills, or any other of those equally vital and important questions, upon which the legislature delights to expend its time and the country's patience, without of his own accord, unaided by any higher intelligence, discovering the difference between St. Stephen's and the saint after which it is named—for the latter, the Early Fathers tell us, "*was a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost*," whereas the former, as must be palpable to the meanest capacity, is an assemblage full of froth and the hollowest humbug; so the great thing is to stick close to its leading HUMBUGENCES, and this Sir Titaniferous did. And there they now stood in the persons of Lord Acorn, Mr. Jericho Jabber, Sir Jonas Packthemall, Mr. Wallstaff, Sir Janus Allpuff, and a Colonel Giltpin, who was a nonentity as to talent, but an out-and-outer as to obsequiousness and parliamentary elasticity, and therefore was of use in his generation; for politics, in the present day; are nothing more than a sort of great town and borough picnic to which one brings brains (*à la financier*), another spoons, another tongue, another *tête de veau au naturel*, and so on; but the beauty of this arrangement is, that while every man looks exclusively after his own individual quota, he profits as much as he can by his neighbours. It must be confessed that this group was anything but a graceful one, though Lady Georgiana's velvet portières formed a back-ground to it that would have been at once the admiration and the despair of a painter. Beyond it stood another (of men, of course, as is generally the case in England), consisting of Mr. George Beaucherche, the sexagenarian legacy-hunter, of whom Tom Levens had made (not exactly) honorable mention. He was what some persons thought a handsome man, he himself being decidedly of that opinion; but, being very large, and every year getting larger, without his finances in any degree keeping pace with his personal expansion, and being withal of a minutely

thrifty and economical turn, he had so completely outgrown his clothes that every one lived in a constant state of alarm, that having already seen too much of Mr. George Beaucherche, they might see more ; and so the public hope was, that the first use he would make of that silly and heartless old woman's (Lady Dives') legacy, would be to get a new wardrobe. Altogether, the chief characteristic of his appearance was *mauvais ton*, as it was an admirable imitation of those Brummagem brigands, as confectioned at the Surrey theatre, or Bartholomew fair ; and, indeed, he could not have been quite as irresistible as he thought himself, considering the ceaseless pains he had taken, and the reams of paper he had sacrificed in letter-writing, never to have succeeded in hooking even one legacy, till he had got from that besotted old Lady Dives what should have been the provision for her old and faithful servants. One of the many strings to his bow (a *very* long one it was) had been Mrs. Jericho Jabber during the lifetime of her first husband, when she very foolishly, and not very honorably, used to shew and laugh over his voluminous diurnal epistles ; but as Mr. Jericho Jabber was at the same time playing exactly the same game, and being the cleverer *vau rien* of the two, he was *in at the death literally*, and carried off the lean widow and her fat jointure. *Beyond* a certain point no one *can* bear : the loss of the lady, there is no doubt, Mr. Beaucherche *would* and *could* have borne *à la* Brutus, when he heard how his Portia fell ; but the loss of the £5000 a-year jointure, of which he had made *so* sure, eaten so many bad dinners, and wasted (as it turned out) so much good flattery to secure,—*that* was, indeed, a blow such as only the hurricanes of adverse fate can aim ; but, no doubt, as he did not mortally succumb under it, he called philosophy to his aid, and consoled himself with a maxim of his Imperial Majesty Napoleon the Third, *i.e.*, that “ a great enterprise never succeeds at the first attempt,” though it was far from being *his* first attempt in that particular line. Next to him stood a little man, with rather a fine and somewhat Shakespearian head, which he did not quite belie, as he wrote plays, some of which were, in wit and artistic arrangement, infinitely superior to the much overrated *Rivals*, *School for Scandal*, and *Critic* ; but then he was not Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the boon companion of princes, the *enfant gâté* of duchesses, and the Jeremy Diddler of tradesmen—he was only plain Mr. Pluché, with that great drawback to getting on in “ the best bad society ” in London, to wit, being an exceedingly respectable man in private life, having been an excellent husband and father, *mais en revanche*, he was a greater tuft-hunter than even Sheridan, for, in short, poor Mr. Pluché was just the sort of little, grateful, humble, “ thank you for small mercies ” sort of man, to die of a bow from a lord “ in aromatic* pain.” The third

* Query, aristocratic.

of this group was a trading politician, a Mr. Filmer Snobson, who had begun his political—no, parliamentary—career as a red-hot Tory, but finding the Whigs had a much longer reign of it than the most sanguine amongst them ever could have anticipated, and his wife being Radical in everything, even to her ugliness, which was on the largest and coarsest possible scale of what Comte D'Orsay used to call *laideur au blanc*—to wit, a *fade blonde*—and she being all for Free Trade, the he Snobson suddenly launched into Liberalism; and really now-a-days the humbug is so nearly equalized, whether under the names of "Whig," "Tory," "Conservative," or "Free-Trader," that, if it were not to humour some booby constituency, who will *not* believe that an M.P., under whatsoever name, is an equal fiction, it would not be worth any of these gentry's while to take the trouble of what is called "ratting." However, Mr. Filmer Snobson's own texture was so essentially cotton—without one silken thread—that perhaps he had done well to change his colours, in winding out the prosy speeches in the house, which were as interminable as the longest reel of that commodity that ever found its way into the market. Mrs. Filmer Snobson (certainly she was *not* handsome! *mais ça n'empêche pas les sentimens*; and doubtless it was her striking likeness to Prince Albert's prize, Lady Swine, that caused her to be so well received at Court),—but Mrs. Filmer Snobson, we were about to observe, was now sitting talking to Mrs. Jericho Jabber, and between them they divided the trammels of marriage for their respective lords and masters (?), thus rendering it only a sort of limited liability, as Mrs. Jericho Jabber was only bone of her husband's bone, while Mrs. Filmer Snobson was entirely flesh of her spouse's flesh.

In the offing, a little behind them, and considerably interfering with Lady de Baskerville's and Lord Celendon's *tête-à-tête*, was a most hideous and exceedingly vulgar-looking old woman, with a hump upon her back, and one eye about the size of a shilling, while its companion was not above half those dimensions, which had at one time earned for her the *sobriquet* of eighteen pence. She was rouged, or rather raddled up to these two unequal optics; and her dress, being very short both in the waist and in the length, and being composed of black tulle powdered all over with round white spots, added to her attractions by giving her the air of a superannuated guinea-fowl, to whom repletion and rheumatism had rendered roosting an unpleasant process, and who therefore preferred standing on one leg, as she was then doing. Having been an authoress before the beginning of this century, when blotting a certain number of pages, no matter with what trash, and surviving the operation, was considered quite sufficient of a miracle to give a person the *entrée* into society as Mr. This, or Miss That, "THE AUTHORESS," though her sire in private life had been a footman, and in public a strolling player, and herself a governess,

She contrived to make herself *useful* to some of the *haute volée* of those early times, and so was handed down to their descendants of the present day as a sort of oral tradition, and, the ornamental being impossible, the *useful* still continued; for this *objet non charmant* was Lady Gorgon, the most indefatigable match-maker, or match-marrer in London, according as she was retained on either side; and where there were no matches to be made, and they were already marred beyond her powers of meddling, she was equally ready to undertake, and clever in executing, any other little odd job in the way of helping on a profligate husband, provided he were rich and well up in the world, and forging a lie or disseminating a calumny about his victim wife; and much of this honorable sort of secret service had she rendered to her friend and in every way worthy *compère*, Sir Janus Allpuff. She and her sister had both succeeded, late in life, in prevailing upon two be-knighted apothecaries to marry them, and on one occasion, when the two knights of the pestle were abroad with their perpetual blisters, it used to be said in Paris, "Those poor men cannot help being apothecaries, but they really should not drag their *drugs* about with them." Having given this slight sketch of Lady Gorgon's antecedents, it is needless to say that she was *parvenue* to her very crooked back-bone, and lived upon lords and ladies, and by them too, for the British Government, ever ready to mark its gratitude for services of a *particular* sort, had bestowed a pension of some hundreds a-year upon her. But it was not too much, all things considered, for, to parody the great Condé's *un sou par victoire*, it was not, though it appeared a great deal to the *uninitiated*, in reality much more than a halfpenny a job. But as the Duke of Twilglenon had just arrived, looking more ruffianly even and swell-mobbish than usual, it was of course necessary for Lady Gorgon to drop the gouty old Lord Celendon, as a minor prey, and join his Grace (?), Mr. Jericho Jabber, Sir Janus Allpuff, and that clique, to whom she was flatterer in chief. Truly says Tacitus, "*pessimum genus inimicorum laudantes*," while the proverb asserts that "Flattery is the food of fools," which is rather too invidious toward the poor fools, as your clever knaves, your hangers-on to popularity, your runners after the world's great shadows and bubbles, your despisers of character and seekers of *reputation* (?), feed far more largely on this garbage than your poor, simple fool; and, like the Styrian peasants, who take graduated doses of arsenic to improve the freshness and sheen of their *appearance*, either would die if the poison ceased to be administered; and there are none so susceptible of flattery as those who pique themselves upon being flattery-proof. Of this Shakespear (who, as Mr. Phippen justly observed, knew everything) was so fully aware that he makes Decius, in the play of *Julius Cæsar* in the conspiracy scene, answer Cassius, who doubts whether they shall be able to persuade Cæsar to come forth to the Capitol that day—

“ ———— never fear that ;
 I can o’ersway him, for he loves to hear
 That unicorn may be betray’d with trees,
 And bears with glasses, elephants holes,
 Lions with toils, and man with flattery :
 But when I tell him *he* hates flatterers,
 He says he does, *being then most flattered.*”

But where flattery, which is the legitimate tool of the hireling and the parasite, becomes indeed a thing to grieve and to wonder at is, when the great and noble stoop to the degradation of employing it. Passing over more modern instances, who, without a feeling of deep regret and humiliation at belonging to a species that can so prostitute the Promethean spark they possess above other animals, can read that master-piece of human eloquence, as it will for ever remain—the oration of Cicero, addressed to Cæsar on the behalf of Marcellus—and not be moved also with astonishment that the transcendent talents centred in the great patriot and defender of the liberty of the people of Rome should not only bend before and supplicate the invader of that liberty, but should also grovel down into flattering him with the same lips that had destroyed Cataline?

But *this* certainly is irrelevant to such animaculæ as my Lady Gorgon, who far more resembled the *ichneumon*, which travellers tell us is the parasite of the crocodile, its business being to clean its master’s teeth (a somewhat dirty job truly); but then its perquisites are the carnage it finds there. So leaving Lady Gorgon among her crocodiles, like “an *allegory* on the banks of the Nile,” and passing over the other groups distributed about the room, who were merely ladies and gentlemen, and therefore had nothing to particularly distinguish them in the present day, which is one of high intellect and profound science, wherein even the lowest acts of blackguardism must be treated *intellectually*, and the blackest crime perpetrated scientifically—for as *The Times* truly observed, touching the Rugeley and Darlington poisonings, “If the thing is to be done, it must be done scientifically; the darkest deed of the blindest passion must be accomplished with the patience and clear-sightedness of the coldest intellect,” thus safely eschewing the devil’s highway of open crime and vulgar murder; but, as we before said, we will leave the *ichneumon* with her crocodiles *en rôle de cure-dent*, and go down into the hall again to escort Mr. Phippen up-stairs, as he may be shy.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHERE, AMONG MANY GREAT (?) MEN, MR. PHIPPEN MEETS WITH A GENTLEMAN; AND AS HE (MR. PHIPPEN) RUBS UP SOME ANTIQUE REMINISCENCES OF THE CONSULATE AND THE EMPIRE, HE FINDS THAT OLD STORIES, LIKE OLD FASHIONS, COME INTO VOGUE AGAIN, IF KEPT SUFFICIENTLY LONG; SO THAT, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, HE ACQUITS HIMSELF NON CE MALE, CONSIDERING THAT IT IS HIS DEBUT IN HIGH LIFE, EITHER 'ABOVE' OR 'BELOW' STAIRS.

JUST as Mr. Phippen arrived at Dunnington House a cab drove up, and two men got out. One was a literary celebrity, and justly deserved to be such, as far as his very clever novels went; but, in gratitude to the ignorance and inanity of the Matrons and Misses of the fashionable world, of whom he was becoming *l'enfant chéri*, he had recently given a series of lectures upon the celebrities of the eighteenth century, which, had he calculated one whit less truly upon the profound and extensive ignorance of his audience, would, from their vapidity and total absence of anything like new light thrown upon the thread-bare matter he had selected, have been an insult to that modicum of understanding, which even lords and ladies are allowed by courtesy. However, he had *not* reckoned without his host, and the mobs of the *élite* which attended these lectures thought them all very fine, and felt much edified at being, for the first time, apprised of what every decently-educated child of twelve years old ought to know; and so Mr. Thrashaway, the lecturer, became more popular than ever—a *fait accompli* which had procured him the additional honor (?) of being patronized by his present companion, a Mr. Abner Haystack, a gentleman of Jewish extraction and appearance, not handsome, nor even like the King of Persia, except in name, but he was a great linguist, and really a clever man, so that he might have taken his stand upon his own ground, and that a high one; but he preferred being the veriest tuft-hunter in London, a sort of appendix to the peerage, and infester of great houses; and this it was, perhaps, which gave to his nearly grey and very bushy hair a *faux air* of flunkeyism, as if it had "caught the powder living as it flew!" During their drive to Dunnington House, he had been kindly initiating his infinitely cleverer companion into the *superfinites* of the *crème de la crème* of society, of which, as he had passed his whole life in skimming, he naturally fancied himself "quite the cheese!" But to prove how completely he was of the times, thrifty, in his strictures upon *savoir vivre* he had like all the great (?) personages of the present

day, kept a sharp look out as to his *sous*, and so had proposed to his companion that they should divide the cab-fare; for every soul of this generation, whether old or young, rich or poor, a *Mecænas* or a mendicant, seems thoroughly impressed with one of the few great truths that Göthe, that Jupiter Tonans of the modern Pantheistic school of cold-blooded materialism, ever uttered, namely, that

“With neither purse nor scrip, thou lightly climb’st the hill;
But the bag weighed down with riches is a *lighter* burden still.”

Now Mr. Thrashaway, who had borne with quiet unction the elegant extracts from Mr. Abner Haystack’s *diptycha* of living and defunct magnates, determined to bide his time for illustrating Mrs. Primrose’s favourite proverb, touching the impossibility of converting the aural organ of a certain animal into a velvet receptacle for money, and so take his revenge of the elegant Abner. And that time was now come; for before the assembled legion of powdered and unpowdered satellites of “that great Orion,” Sir Titaniferous Thompson’s house, the relentless Thrashaway walked up to the superfine Haystack, without any symptom of that love proverbially said to exist between ancient cows and the reality of his bucolic name, and said, in an audible voice and with an air savouring far more of the Seven Dials than of the seven Dukes which Mr. Haystack had been pouring out upon him like the seven vials in the Revelations during their drive—

“I tell you what, Haystack, I’ll toss you for the cab-fare.”

Poor Haystack! Had he been tossed by a bull, he could not have looked more aghast! But there was nothing for it but philosophy, and he had not translated so much German in vain; and so recalling Göthe’s epigram of

“How, when and where? No oracles reply;
Restrain thyself to *since*, and ask not for the why?”

And since thus it was that Mr. Thrashaway had so committed himself, and compromised *him*, before the flunkey-ocracy of the great *parvenu*’s establishment, the elegant Abner had only to pass on and ascend the velvet-covered stairs with as much dignity in his deportment as if he had been really the King of Persia, instead of only his namesake. Mr. Thrashaway followed, enjoying his discomfiture, while from a study off the hall issued three more guests, one of whom was the identical tropical-looking gentleman who had got into the train with Mrs. Penrhyn and Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, in their way down to Baron’s Court; this personage rejoiced in the name of Hebblethwaite. The other two were of so ordinary an appearance as not to need a description;—in fact, they not only *looked* like Joneses and Smiths, but they *were* Jones and Smith, for those were their respective names. Having allowed all these to precede him, so that he might be the very last, Mr. Phip-

pen followed the groom of the chambers upstairs, who, though he had twice enquired the name of that unknown personage, was not able, or affected not to be able, to catch it, so that after all, that worthy man, who was quite content with his own good name, was announced by the better known and more aristocratic one of

"Mr. Phippen, my lady."

Whereupon Lady Georgiana, having received her cue, and anxious to give it to her guests, rose, and greeted the last arrival with the most *empressee* civility. Indeed, had Mr. Phippen thought about it (which he did not), he could not but have remarked that, instead of that super-abundance of bad manners so rife in "good" (?) society, which generally produces for every unknown face an impertinent stare, legibly demanding "Who on earth are you?" there was, on the contrary, a deferential sort of falling back, and a slight pause in the tessellations of conversation going on about the room, as if he had been actually some Prince of Saxe Swilland-smokeum, with a revenue of two whole hundreds a year. The fact was, for their very souls they could not do less, for Sir Titaniferous had, as a preliminary measure, bestowed six millions on him, being just three more than he actually possessed; but this increase of riches Mr. Phippen ignored, and therefore had no merit in not setting his heart upon them, though it might have jarred on his self-love (had he had any) to have known *why* his advent was so *very successful*! Sir Titaniferous followed in Lady Georgiana's wake, making him a speech for his kindness in coming to them, and then, turning to his aunt, said—

"Lady De Baskerville, allow me to present *our good friend*, Mr. Phippen, to you."

The greatlady immediately rose, the brilliants on her neck emitting additional scintillations, it might be from the accelerated pulsation of her heart, in which prudence and pride were encountering in a gladiatorial struggle; but, the former coming off the victor, as it always does in minds well regulated by the world's chronometer, she held out one of her white and sparkling hands to the Samaritan of Threadneedle-street, and said how *happy* she was to have the pleasure of making Mr. Phippen's acquaintance.

But whether it was that Mr. Phippen was completely overpowered and taken aback by this unexpected honor—or whether, with a twinge of Threadneedle-street, he did not care for her ladyship's hand without her seal, we cannot pretend to say; but certain it is that, with a total absence of the gallantry that was natural, and the courtesy that was habitual to him, he stood bowing profoundly all the while, leaving Lady De Baskerville's proffered hand in abeyance and never once attempting to take it. But, as his face at first became very red and then suddenly livid, we can only suppose that the honor overpowered him, and that he avoided purposely taking the fair hand extended to him, from being of my

Lord Duke's opinion in *High Life below Stairs*, that "*too much freemasonry breeds despotism.*"

But Sir Titaniferous, who was nervously watching this little scene, now came to the rescue, saying—

"I regret to say you will not meet the Duchess of — and the Princess —, for we had an apology this morning, as they were asked to dine at the palace, and Lord Oaks has failed us for the same reason."

"Oh!" said Mr. Phippen, with as much bearish bluntness as if he had been drumming on the table in his own office, "you need not make *me* any apology about that; it's a very different thing when a whole audience arrive at a theatre to be disappointed by hearing that the actors have been ordered off to Windsor at a moment's notice, and there is to be *no* play; and if, indeed, we are to have *no* dinner because *your* royalties are retained for the Palace, *that* is another affair, for as a good Christian, one don't like substituting fasts for feasts."

It was now poor Sir Titaniferous's turn to look disconcerted, which he did, past the power of concealing it at this uncouth and democratic speech; till he once more opportunely recollected that six millions gave a man (aye, and would even give a woman!) a right to say, *he*, or do whatever they pleased, independent of the Royal Assent. But here, in his turn, the host was rescued by a Member of the Humane Society stepping forward, in the person of a Mr. Mills Bouverie, a very handsome, gentleman-like young man, who said to Mr. Phippen, with a smile—

"Why no, *that* would be rather too much of an inverse ratio of the Emperor of Morocco's considerate permission to all the rest of the world to go to dinner as soon as *he* has dined."

"Very true; and those who, like me, have no fancy for things *à la Tartare* would fare but badly," rejoined Mr. Phippen.

Here dinner was announced, and Mr. Phippen said in his own mind, "Gad! I'll stick to this young fellow, he'll make a good pilot for me as I daresay he knows all the soundings here, and will be able to tell me who the people are." It had evidently been arranged in the programme that he was to have the distinguished honor of taking Lady De Baskerville down to dinner; but, commercially calculating that as he had not availed himself of her hand, he could not be expected to offer her his arm, he would *not* take the numerous hints given him by the host and hostess, but walked on with Mr. Mills Bouverie, keeping up a conversation so as not to lose him in the crowd, and, therefore, Lady De Baskerville was obliged to be taken down, or rather to take down Lord Celendon as she went *à pas* accommodating her pace to his hobble. When every one was at length seated, Mr. Phippen, who had secured Mr. Bouverie on his right, perceived that on his left he had Lady De Baskerville, while upon looking down the table he

saw that in the vicinity of Sir Titaniferous were those "three black graces," Hebblethwait, Smith and Jones, as if to keep his eye upon them, for fear they should say or do anything worthy of their names; for nervously susceptible as Lady Georgiana was about all *his lèze bienséances*, he, in descending the ladder, was ten times more fidgetty touching the sayings and doings of those of his former associates, whom for private and particular reasons he dared not cut, and was actually obliged to ask to come again and again. As birds of a feather proverbially flock together, Lord Acorn, Sir Janus Allpuff, and Mr. Jericho Jabber, had got as near to each other as the intervention of the respective ladies they were compelled to take down would allow; the Duke of Twilglenon having, of course, been obliged to sacrifice *himself* to Lady Georgiana. Mr. Haystack, after the horrible circumstance that had occurred in the hall about the cab, kept as much aloof from Mr. Thrashaway as possible, that the footmen who had witnessed the outrage might suppose Mr. Thrashaway was merely a casualty, and not a habit of his. But decidedly the Fates were adverse to him that day, for just as he was steering towards a peeress, who gave very good dinners herself, in order to offer his arm for the present occasion, he was pounced upon and retained by Lady Gorgon, who had effectually baited her hook with a whisper that she had something to tell him about a *pétit dîner fin* that was soon to be at Swansdown House; and so, *all her geese* being swans, the victimized Abner fell naturally into the trap. Mr. George Beaucherche, from steadily pursuing one sole aim and end in life, was more fortunate, and had secured a rich old dowager, to whom (*this one being of a pious turn*) he was talking tracts and toast-and-water. Alas! what a pity that he had not known of Mrs. Kelly *before* she was shot, as though a duke and two peers had been refused by the *çidevant* poor outcast's millions; yet, as the latter rejection was said to have been owing to the machinations of the late Mr. John Sadleir, and he having—

"Like a duke, or a duchess's daughter
Quaff'd prussic acid, without any water;"

she surely would not have been able to resist so experienced a hero from the diggings as Mr. George Beaucherche, who always at least *looked* sure of being very successful!

"Shall you go to Paris for the Exhibition?" asked Mr. Mills Bouverie of his neighbour, by way of beginning another conversation.

"Well, I have some thoughts of it," said Mr. Phippen; "for 'gad, I should much like to go again, as I have never been there since I was a youngster of sixteen—first, during the Consulate, and, four years later, at the commencement of the Empire."

"Two most interesting epochs; for I suppose you saw Bona-

"Yes, several times," said Mr. Phippen, laying down his fork. "And I'll tell you an incident that occurred the first time I saw him: You must know when I was first sent abroad I was consigned to the Abbé Sicard, who lionized me about Paris, and accommodated himself as good naturedly to all my ignorance and folly of sixteen as if he had been my grandmother. One day in our usual round of sight-seeing, he took me to the National Institute to see all the celebrities of that day, pointing them out to me, and telling me the names of their works. 'And what,' said I, 'are the names of the works of that young *savant*?' showing him one he had not named. '*Ciel! est il possible!*' cried he, 'that you do not know that *that young savant has given us an entire new history of France in six months! That is the First Consul.*'"

"How very interesting!" said Mr. Bouverie; "and was Napoleon handsome at that time?"

"Yes; for he had not been to Egypt, or grown fat. I wish I had been older; but still, young as I was, I was particularly struck with the probing expression of his eyes, which seemed to reach everybody's thoughts, without ever betraying his own."

"Of course then you saw the Abbé Sicard's own Institution for the Deaf and Dumb?"

"Oh, yes! I was a constant attendant there; and so were all the most elegant women in Paris—Madame Talien, Madame Recamier, Madame La Grange, Lally Tolendal, and all that set, in the most beautiful toilets, as they were thought in that day; but 'gad! they were so scanty that I recollect the 'wit in Paris' then was to call them 'Rumford's,' after Count Rumford's stoves, which were said to produce the greatest possible amount of warmth, with the least possible expenditure of material."

Mr. Bouverie smiled, and then asked if the intelligence of the Abbé Sicard's pupils was as wonderful as tradition had handed it down.

"Well, really it was. I think I see the good Abbé now, with that kind and most benevolent face of his, rapidly talking to all his silent pupils on his fingers; their answers used to be written down in chalk on a black board. Two of them I was so struck with, that I wrote them down at the time, and therefore remember. One of these questions asked by the Abbé was, 'What is gratitude?' Answer:—'The memory of the heart.' The other—'What is friendship?' to which the reply was, 'Friendship is the love of the mind.' Now, these answers would have been remarkable in boys of fifteen and sixteen, endowed with all their faculties; but they were peculiarly so in those poor deaf and dumb children."

"As you say: but indeed in England I don't think we ever could have heard such answers, for in our systems of education for every class, we enforce mental and physical, but no moral and

psychological development. But I think you said you were again in Paris during the Empire?"

"Yes, for a short time; and I used to attend the lectures of Cuvier on Natural History, who read admirably, and whose lectures, as well as those of Fourcroy on Chemistry, were at that time the great *rendezvous* of all the *élégans* and *élégantes* of Paris. But the thing that impressed me most on that visit was hearing the noble, brave, and devoted speech of poor Jules—(I think it was Jules de Polignac),—braving all the consequences of the Emperor's fury, and requesting his young life might be accepted in lieu of his brothers."

"Yes, it was very noble; but he was ultimately reprieved, was he not?"

"Why yes, 'gad! it made a great sensation at the time, I remember. The Empress Josephine had so arranged it as to smuggle in Madame de Polignac, the mother, early one morning, into the private apartments at St. Cloud, where no one but the Emperor and Empress were allowed to come; and she threw herself at Napoleon's feet to ask her son's life, and being soon joined in her entreaties by Josephine, she gained her point. 'Pon my life, the restoration of the Empire in France, and this talk of peace, is all to me like living my young days over again! and if we do have peace, I think the *same* skits that we had at the peace of Amiens will do over again; for they said on that occasion, that although the war was over, General Satisfaction had not returned to England, and at the Stock Exchange I remember they stuck up this doggrel:—

'Peace	<i>Ratified.</i>
Bulls	<i>Gratified.</i>
Bears	<i>Mortified.</i>
Nation	<i>Dissatisfied.</i>
Alley	<i>Purified.</i>
All	<i>Electrified.'</i>

But I think the best of them all, and the one most likely to be appropriate for the next peace, was over the Lunatic Asylum, at York, written by one of the inmates—query, should he have been there? Let me see—oh! yes, these are the lines—

'The *Statesman* gave us war,
The *Soldier* gives us peace;
Surely *this* is madness,
But wonders ne'er will cease.'"

"Very good," laughed Mr. Bouverie, quite delighted with the old gentleman's anecdotes, which he evidently told with much *gusto*, as though he wished to prove that, notwithstanding so much *talk* of progression, *persons* at all events, whatever things might do, remained much as they were when he began the world.

"Do you remember any more of those *jeux d'esprit*?" asked Mr. Bouverie.

"At one time I had hundreds of them, and occasionally they spring up again all of a sudden, like a crop of mushrooms after a shower of rain; but I suppose you have heard that epigram that was made at the time upon Charles Fox having said that he was glad England had *not* got what she had been fighting for."

"No, I have not; but I should like to hear it."

"The origin of it was this:—Fox was dining at 'The Shakespear,' just at the conclusion of the peace of Amiens, and after having launched out in a most enthusiastic strain as to how glorious it was to the French Republic, and to the Chief Consul, who deserved glory for so glorious a struggle, he wound up by saying, 'The object of the war we have not gained most certainly, and I like the peace so much the better on that account.' Whereupon, the next day, this epigram was all over London—

'The peace I approve of, because 'twill advance
The republican cause and the glory of France;
And that England has warred without gaining her ends,
Is a subject of triumph to me and my friends.

'Where's he from, whose lips such strange sentiments show—
A Briton, a Frenchman, a friend, or a foe?
Ask the man at 'The Shakespear,' where lately he dined;
'He's a Patriot-Whig, and a friend to mankind.'

'Cry you mercy, without *your* intelligence, waiter,
I'd mistaken your Patriot-Whig for a traitor.'

Mr. Bouverie thanked him and complimented him upon his good memory.

"Gad, Sir, I remember everything of those days as if it were but yesterday; it's only last week that slips away from me, so as that I can never overtake it."

Here their attention was roused by old Lord Celendon, saying across the table to Mr. Thrashaway, while he cast an indignant look at Mr. Jericho Jabber and Sir Janus Allpuff—

"I tell you what, my good Sir, when once the most barefaced corruption has seized upon the *representatives* of a country, it's all up with the country, for it's like chronic disease, where things are sure to proceed from bad to worse; till, whether the government is dissolved or not, the constitution must be seriously, not to say irrevocably, injured. What has been, may be, and *will* be again. Cæsar destroyed the Commonwealth, and after his time each succeeding Emperor, every successive Senate grew more abject and more complying than the last, till the old Roman spirit was entirely extinguished. And so it will be with the old English spirit, if a certain set of unprincipled political mountebanks are let to run their rig much longer."

"Surely your Lordship must admit, taking a statesmanlike view

of the case," rejoined Mr. Thrashaway, (who, whatever his *soi-disant* politics might be, was always in the habit, in the periodicals with which he was connected, of helping those very lame dogs, Mr. Jericho Jabber and Sir Janus Allpuff over the stile, as he now belonged to their literary clique; "surely you will admit that a consistent opposition, whether in the Senate or the Press, is, and has ever been, deemed beneficial to those countries in which it exists?"

"Aye!—thank you, Sir, for the word—a *consistent* opposition may be so, but not a scribbling and a devil-take-the-hindmost opposition, whose *only* principle is opposition, with *one* solitary look-out, that of self-advancement."

"I certainly think," chimed in Mr. Haystack, who was always happy to coalesce with a peer, of whatsoever party, but who was in his vocation on the present occasion, since, as an *habitué* of Swansdown House, he was of course a Whig *renfoncé*, "that is, I quite agree with Lord Celendon; and, moreover, I also think that our degenerating honor and increasing iniquity is becoming truly classical, for we are beginning to label our worst crimes and vices with the grandiloquent names of high-sounding virtues, like the Greeks and Romans."

"Pardon me," said Mr. Bouverie; "but I think the ancient Greeks and Romans would feel themselves much aggrieved by your comparison, or, at least, the Greeks, for the Romans I give up to you as a set of flinty, pompous *vaux rien*; but the Greeks, when they committed a horrible and unnatural crime, had, at all events, the grace to know and feel that it *was* a crime, and to call it such; for instance, in the *Cæphori* of Æschylus, Orestes is made to say that he was commanded by Apollo to avenge his father's murder, and yet if he obeyed, that he was to be delivered to the Furies; and the tragedy accordingly concludes with a chorus deploring the fate of Orestes, obliged to take vengeance against a mother, and involved thereby in a crime against his will. Now, *theoretically*, it is impossible for us, *nominally* unpagan moderns, to lend our minds to notions so irrational and absurd. So much for our powers of *belief*. But I'll tell you what we would *do* in our modern Babylon, were the tragedy of *Clytemnestra* to be enacted in real life, with this difference, that Agamemnon should be the aggressor, and turn Clytemnestra out of her home to make way for his mistresses, and then hunt her through the world, and order her son eventually to murder her, if *he*, instead of the heroic Agamemnon, were a craven who had not even the courage of his vices, and so took to the most slimy hypocrisy, in lieu of virtue, and became a trading politician, got a certain clique in the press to write him up, taking care, of course, to keep the whole contents of his coffers in his own possession, while he subjected his victim to every privation and humiliation,—you would see how all London would uphold him, and what an amiable and charming young man

Orestes would be thought for murdering his mother ! For we are so truly Spartan, that the only thing we ever punish in vice (or in virtue, either, for that matter) is *failure*. Only *succeed*, and you *must be right*, whether it be in poisoning your friends, swindling the public, or in the minor and highly-popular little pastime of outraging a woman at every source, till she curses not only the blasphemous mockery of the *name* of wife, but the still greater one of mother. Depend upon it, under *such* circumstances, a *modern* Orestes, whose papa made himself useful to any political party, and was in what's called good (?) society in London, would be under no necessity of doing as the Greek Orestes is made to do in the first act of *Electra*, and go about spreading the report of his own death, in order to humour the superstition of his compatriots, who thought that after all such reports the object of them would be sure to die in reality ; for *we* are wiser in our generation, and it is not till the measure of our social or political iniquity is full to overflowing, that we begin to reap a harvest of ovations from our moral society and our discerning public."

"There I quite agree with you," said Mr. Phippen ; "for every day's experience convinces me that the two great and, indeed, only secrets for getting on in the world now-a-days is total want of principle and total want of feeling. Yet still, even Brummagen modern *Æneases* (?) should remember that history *has* its truth-recording STRABOS as well as its poetical fictionizing Virgils ; and that truth, however plain, will, sooner or later, find a chronicler."

"Aye, *even* what is called '*so clever*,'" rejoined Mr. Bouverie ; "however that sort of electrottype cleverness of young England, or rather of young England's leaders, makes one always on the lookout for the realization of Lord Corke's assertion, that '*Wrong actions are not to be defended either by names or numbers*. Vicious examples may receive a stamp from fashion, and, like counterfeit metals, at their first appearance may dazzle and pass for gold, till Time, that irresistible discoverer of falsehood, rubs off the gloss and reveals their baseness.'"

"I believe it does eventually," rejoined Mr. Phippen, "but the worst of it is, that Time, being an old fellow like me, always travels by such a deucedly slow coach that he lets that sort of literary and political cracksmen victimize the public to an immense amount before his detectives come up with and expose them. But as I take it for granted that you know all the people here, will you tell me who those two ill-looking fellows opposite to us are—the one with black ringlets, that looks as if they were made out of snakes and leeches, and the other with a head of light hair and moustaches, like a distaff gone mad, and the lines in both their faces giving one the idea of the devil having ridden rough-shod over them, and indented the hoof of every vice into them ?"

"Oh ! those," laughed Mr. Bouverie, "are Mr. Jericho Jabber and Sir Janus Allpuff, my Lord Oaks's two leading acrobats."

There is one of the chief trained bands of our Metropolitan cliques, of which what is called 'society' in London has some half-dozen—to wit, the Lansdowne House clique, which can only talk Lansdowne House; the Devonshire House clique, *ibid*; the Stafford House clique, *du cappel*; with its new variation of the Uncle Tom fooleries; and then the slow coach heavies of the Bath House clique bring up the rear with their *talk, without*, however, 'the knowledge of common things.' Next, dense as a November fog, comes the Parliamentary Bore clique, with their motions, measures, committees, pairings (but *no repairs*), crams, and all the *impromptus faites à loisir* of which they accuse their last guiltless election."

"Good heavens! how can Lord Oaks think of balancing his political ladder on the chins of two such mountebanks? 'Pon my life! their hair alone is worth paying a shilling to see, and reminds me of the intrigues that used to be carried on, when Bonaparte was First Consul, by means of locks of hair; but you'll be tired of my old stories."

"By no means, pray let me hear what you were going to say."

"Well, you must know, that during the Consulate great excitement all of a sudden reigned in Paris, at the First Consul having appeared frequently in powder; for, 'gad, Sir! it turned out that his barber was no other than the famous ex-Chouan in disguise, who had undertaken to give signals to the partizans of *Louis Dix-huit* by his manner of powdering and frizzing the Chief Consul. It was observed that two expresses were sent off to Warsaw the day he first appeared in powder, and this circumstance having been communicated to Fouché, that sleepless dragon-commissary of Police, he arrested the *Barbier Comte* who had long been marked *suspecte*, even from the tenth of the previous Fructidor in Fouché's private book; and, when arrested, upon him were found a very curious cypher in curls, *chignons*, straight, long and short hair, together with several hieroglyphics in curling-irons. It seems that *powder* and curls, or *cannons* as they were called, were very significant intimations of *war*, and plain and straight hair denoted *peace*; and all this handy-work of the Tuileries Figaro it was that had made the *Tiers Consolidés* fall to fifty-four, as the right side of the Consul's head described the French Republic, while the left was geographically sectioned out for the rest of Europe; so that a prominent curl in any particular division, powdered more or less, denoted hostility, and the degree or approach of it to any part of Europe. It was actually sworn on the *procès verbal*, that the Swiss Cantons, which stood very high and close to the centre of the Chief Consul's *toupee*, were powdered thick; that Spain was particularly frosted; and upon the right side of the head there was combed a prospectus of a new Constitution. The Consul's head, upon being compared with this cypher, left no doubt of the conspiracy; besides which, several false curls in the shape of ships, artillery and bastions, had been found on the culprit, who was handed over to the *prefects*

of the Palace, to be tried by a jury, half crops and half *pens de poudre*—ha! ha! ha! ha! Such were the *jeux d'esprit* in those days, and I was just thinking as our friend the *Jew d'esprit* opposite has evidently oiled the ringlets on one side of his head more than the other, whether the oleaginous side might not be intended as an Extreme-Uncion cypher to Maynooth, and its more arid *vis-à-vis* as a black frost telegraph to the *perspective Nuvski*."

"Now Barabbas was a robber!"

"He! he! he!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

Laughed Mr. Phippen and his companion. But just then a magnificent *cadenza* from the "*Mose in Egitto*" sighed from one of the hidden bands, and flowing, like a silver tide as it were, through the room, for a moment hushed the less harmonious voices. But as an experienced *chef* has always a sufficient supply of "stock" to meet any unexpected demands on his *batterie de cuisine*, so Mr. Jericho Jabber had always a gymnasium full of athlete enthusiasms, whether for parliamentary, festive, or literary purposes; and therefore he now displayed some wonderful *tours de force* (remaining from an old *cram* he had got up on his return from the Pyramids), upon ancient Greek, Assyrian and Æthiopian music, which naturally whirled him off into a twin ecstasy upon dancing, which (for the benefit of a young lady, who sat within two of him, with a very beautiful pair of eyes, at which he had been for the last half-hour employing his in hurling quotations from one of his own novels about *The Girl*; but Mrs. Jericho Jabber's presence will not allow of our finishing the extract, whatever he may have done, so we will merely state that, for the benefit of that young lady), he designated dancing the photograph of motion; explaining that there was no person or thing that might not be imitated by gesture, and then almost pantomimically showing her, by means of a gold spoon and a terrible hurling of his ringlets to the back of his chair, how the Lacedemonians and Thebans used to attack their enemies, dancing. And on he went to act as master of the ceremonies to their great ball of "*We have been, we are, and we shall be valiant!*"—and, notwithstanding her beautiful eyes, he continued to cram her as if she had been a young turkey instead of a young lady, though, most probably, all this was irrespective of her digestive powers, and only to astonish the listening dunces and dowagers around him, and show that he knew all about it; for in English society, next to ignorance, pedantry is the thing that has the most *succès*—the former for being *à leur portée*, the latter from being beyond it;—so on and on, like poor Tommy Moore's "*Phantom Boat*," or a Will-o'-the-wisp, bounded Mr. Jericho Jabber, till he got back again to Thebes, and, for change of air, from thence to Athens, and told the young lady how the Athenians had erected a statue to Andronicus Caristius, the favourite dancer of Alexander, and how they also advanced Phry-

nious to the highest honors for having danced the Pyrrhica, "which, by the bye," added he, as if Scaliger had *told* him *this* in confidence, "Scaliger boasted many times to have danced before the Emperor Maximilian." And much more did he tell her, of how certain dances were committed by the Romans to their most august priests, called *Salios*; how Lucian deduced the origin of dancing from Heaven, since not only all the celestial bodies, but likewise the ocean and the hearts of animals have a regular motion like it;—winding up with one of those fine presto begone! perorations and hocus-pocus arguments (?) with which he was wont to beguile listening Senates upon much more vital matters, he burst forth with, "Why, as a proof that there *must be*, that *there is*, something divine in the origin of dancing, look at the religious rites into which it has been introduced, not only among the sacrifices of the mysteries of Delii, and round the fountain of Hippocrene, from whence Pindar calls Apollo DANCER, but,"—and here, as a culminating and irrefragable argument (?)* he drew the handkerchief he was flourishing in his right hand hastily, like a strap, across his left,—“more than all this, as an appeal to *our* Christianity (!) did not David dance before the Ark?”

And here Mr. Jericho Jabber leant back exhausted,—as well he might be. Whereupon Mr. Abner Haystack, taking advantage of the halcyon silence that reigned for a moment, when a good thing (as he conceived everything *he* uttered *was*) would be sure to tell, leant forward, and said—

“After all, Jabber, you must allow that there's nothing like the good old English country-dance, as it is the only one wherein one is constantly *changing sides*, and one has to give hands across, and set to the *opposite party*; and indeed the original directions printed on ‘Sir Roger de Coverley,’ and another contemporary country-dance, called ‘CAVENDISH COURT, OR, LOOK SHARP!’ after the *changing sides*, are: ‘first couple *cast up*, and cast off, and hands round.’”

The but ill-suppressed laugh being now decidedly against Mr. Jericho Jabber, he had nothing for it, but to resort to his favourite attitude of sticking his thumbs in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, and uttering his usual Caucasian truism of “God is great!” After which he suddenly took to admiring the mouldings of the ceiling.

But decidedly lovely as were the flowers and fruits that bloomed upon that glittering, gorgeous, Belshazzar-like looking table, and exquisite as were the harmonies which first seemed to stir and, ultimately, to nestle among the leaves, the spirit of mischief must have also been at that banquet, at least as an *Umbr*a, for even Mr. George Beaucherche could not escape its malign influences, though

* And quite as logical a one, too, as that Jews should be admitted into Parliament because the Founder of Christianity was a Jew! *C'est nous qui vivons un peu trop, par exemple!*

he was quietly pursuing the even tenor of his way, *amiably* devoting himself to his rich dowager, descanting on Chapels of Ease he had never seen, and criticizing preachers whom he had never heard; which naturally brought him to the terribly ungodly state of the world in general, and of the London world in particular; and as a modern instance, to illustrate this wise saw, he told old Lady Goldacres the desperate *set* Lady Decameron had made at *him* for her daughter, Lady Belville, before she married Lord Belville."

"Dear me! put in a little *espiègle* woman on his left, a Mrs. De Crepigny, who had gone through all the chapels, and listened to all the preachers with a quiet smile, but who being a friend of Lady Belville's could not let Mr. Beaucherche's last, pass. "You surprise me, Mr. Beaucherche, for I thought, and so did everybody, that Lady Decameron had found for Constance what she had *always sought*—rank and money!"

In which, though more *exigeante*, Lady Decameron was more fortunate than Mr. Beaucherche, as *he* had passed his life in only seeking for the latter of these two boons; and still with the exception of Lady Dives' little homœopathic globule of El Dorado, had not succeeded in securing it. This melancholy reflection upon the unequal distribution of prizes in the lottery of life effectually silenced him for some seconds.

Mr. Jericho Jabber had by this time quite recovered from the effects of the awkward *coup de pied* he had received in Mr. Haystack's vulgar country-dance; and as he fancied himself and his *compère*, Sir Janus Allpuff, the *Boanerges* of their party, (though in every other respect, Heaven knows nothing could be more unlike St. James, and still less like St. John, than they were,) was now holding forth upon the Jews' Disabilities Bill. For still in England now, as in Judæa erst of old, "*These sons of Levi take too much upon themselves.*"

"What is your opinion about the Jews being in Parliament?" asked Mr. Mills Bouverie of his neighbour.

"Gad!" said he, "when there are so many infidels there already, I don't know why *they* should be excluded; but the greatest danger I see in it is this,—if the rabies among a flock of sheep or a herd of deer is such a fearful thing, surely the Rabbis (who are all sharp clever fellows) among such a number of asses will be still worse. But to tell you the truth I don't care how long they squabble over that; but I do wish they would amend the ecclesiastical laws, which are a disgrace to any *nominally* civilized country and as *unchristian* as if we had nothing *but* Jews in the legislature, whose whole and sole aim was to tinker up the Levitical law in lieu of the British Constitution. 'Gad! I must say that I should be very glad when one of the representatives of the Twelve Tribes, and his party now in the House, at the next general election want a cry to go to the

Country with—if they were met with another cry from the Country of 'turn 'em out!'—

"Why, yes; as the English law now stands, women are certainly more brutally oppressed than any other beasts of burden in our free country."

"Yes; but a set of profligate fellows like those belonging to that clique, will twaddle amain both with tongue and pen about marriage ties!"

"Which would be all very well if there was a single law, human or divine, sufficiently stringent to compel such men to have any regard for them; but it is too bad, while *they* have all the immunities of marriage, the poor wretched women, if such be their tyrant's pleasure, should know nothing of those said marriage ties, but the cruelties. Nor do I, I am sorry to say, in our generation, see any chance of their obtaining the slightest justice, since the great principle of English legislation, and the great aim of our social conventionalities appear to be the screening, upholding, and, in short, chartering profligacy in men, whose vices, however heinous, are always considered in the light of 'private affairs,' and so deferentially held sacred accordingly."

"Gad! that is precisely the state of the case."

But here their attention was arrested by hearing the host exclaim—

"Oh! oh! my dear Lord Pendarvis, I cannot allow *that*."

"What are your *aux prises* with Lord Pendarvis about, Sir Titaniferous?" languidly drawled Lady Georgiana, opening her *cassolette* and looking 'Etiquette for *Parvenus*,' over it at her lord, but decidedly not master."

"Why, Lord Pendarvis says that we English, speaking *socially* more than *nationally*, have no sympathy or benevolence; and I maintain we are *the* most charitable, benevolent people in the world. Look at our charitable institutions, and the moment there is a subscription, look at the sums that flow in from all quarters."

"Granted, my dear Sir," rejoined Lord Pendarvis; "I never said that we were *not* fond of seeing our names in print, or that when an injustice, a misfortune, or an outrage *became the fashion*, and that *The Times* had sounded the key-note of the tone our sympathy *ought* to be pitched at, that we were not equally ready to lay down our money and lift up our voices; but for the real Gospel charity of not letting our left hand know what our right does, of the real Christian sympathy that expands to the *unblazoned* sorrows of some more than lowly, of some neglected fellow creature in the prisoned exile of a despised *minority*, and which devotes time and thought, that is, gives with the heart and the head as well as the hand to their necessities—of *this* noiseless, nameless, and consistent, because *constant* benevolence, I say we are incapable.

"I quite agree with you," from Mr. Phippen.

"Does your Lordship forget," said Mr. Pluché, delighted to refresh his mouth with the fragrant names of so many lords and dukes, "the great, the *repeated* acts of pecuniary kindness to Brummel in his exile from his former noble companions?—who, at the time they relieved his necessities, never *could* have supposed that his life would have been published and their generosity proclaimed!"

"No, I do not forget it; and *that* just adds another argument to my budget. Brummel was an unprincipled spendthrift; still he was a human being—had been not only their former companion, but oracle; and as they still had sufficient regard for him *when they were asked*, but not before, mind you, to put their hands in their pockets, had they given with their *hearts* and *heads*, as well as with their hands, they would have saved much of their money and have ensured more of *his* gratitude; for a little more sympathy for the horrible change of the poor old Beau's miserable exile would have caused them to have taken counsel together, and said, 'Let us make some arrangement to secure this poor creature from want for his few remaining years; he is evidently not fit to be trusted with money, so we must give it *in* trust to some one for him.' In short, had they done for him at *first* what Mr. Armstrong, the gentleman at Caen, did for him at *last*, the horrors of his latter days might have been spared; but the tardy benevolence that waits to be *asked* seldom stays to see *how* it can serve; and it is, after all, but a sorry kindness to pull a person out of the water, if you then walk off, and take no further measures towards his recovery. Of all poor Brummel's former friends, the Duchess of York was the most *really* and *generously* kind, not even because she was the most punctual in supplying his necessities, but because she never failed to put the bank-notes into some little *souvenir* of her *own* work, which, without the aid of the kind letter that always accompanied her gifts, would have convinced him that it was not merely the princess relieving the pauper, but the *really great* lady gracefully remembering the poor forgotten exile, whom she still honored with her friendship."

"Hear! hear! hear: 'Gad! I like that man. Who is he?'" asked Mr. Phippen.

"Lord Pendarvis. He's thought such an oddity, because he never will put down his name to a subscription, and yet gives away every shilling he has."

"Well, I only hope he has plenty of shillings to give away."

"No, I am sorry to say he has not; but he is a fine, noble-hearted fellow, and generally stands up for the world's victims against its idols."

"I tell you what, Sir Titaniferous," said Lord Pendarvis; "I'm going to infringe my rule with a vengeance, for I'm not only going to give to, but to get up, a subscription."

"Indeed! What is it to be? guineas, eh?" said the host, casting a hopeless look around, as if he wished people would talk of something pleasant.

"Guineas! no; ponies at the very least. I want to purchase a company (as the Government don't seem to have any intention of giving it to him) for that young Balaklava hero—they say he's only eighteen—young Penrhyn, of the Rifles, who, with his own hand, took up that shell out of the trenches, and flung it back into the Russian lines, where the next minute it exploded. A similar exploit was achieved by a young naval officer on board, I think, Sir Edmund Lyons's ship, the *Agamemnon*; and I call these the two finest and most heroic things that have yet occurred during the Crimean War."

And now a murmur ran round the table, and from voice to voice the praises of Harcourt Penrhyn were sounded with that sort of echoing enthusiasm which *popularity* always is sure of, even among the fashionable glaciers of English society; and as soon as it had in some degree subsided, Sir Titaniferous, with an air of very uncalled-for modesty, considering that it was no earthly merit of his, said—

"Ah! yes! we were very much pleased at such daring in a young fellow of his age, for that young Penrhyn is a near relation of mine."

"Oh! then," said Lord Pendarvis, really very innocently, though every one else thought that he had done it maliciously, "perhaps you would like—very naturally—to give him his company yourself? And we can still employ the subscription in giving him a sword, with the Bayard motto of "*Sans peur et sans reproche*" in brilliants on the hilt."

"Why,—a—I—a—think he would feel more flattered at receiving it by subscription from his countrymen—and—and—countrywomen," stammered Sir Titaniferous, nervously twisting and untwisting his watch-chain round his finger, till a look from Lady Georgiana recalled him to his *vincula matrimonia*, when he hastily added, "but I'll do whatever you think best."

"No, no," said the still innocent Lord Pendarvis, "I think you are right, and that it *will* be a greater compliment to him, the more names there are to the subscription."

"And what are the subscriptions to be, Pendarvis?" said the Duke of Twilglenon, poking forward his ugly red face.

"I'm not proud. I'll take from the smallest coin of the realm upwards; but the best plan will be, to let the poor give according to their means, and the rich according to their meanness."

"My dear fellow, don't be *personal*!" said his Grace, laughing as heartily as if the joke had been *all* at the expense of their host, like the rest of the entertainment; whereas, in reality, by so arranging the matter, Lord Pendarvis was urging a *double* claim on the Duke of Twilglenon.

"If your Lordship will let me know where I can send you a cheque, I shall have much pleasure in forwarding you my subscription to-morrow, both for the company and for the sword," said Mr. Phippen, leaning forward, and looking down the table at Lord Pendarvis.

"Many thanks, if you will have the goodness to send it to the Coventry, in Piccadilly."

"What! You're not going to get people to subscribe for a sword, as well as for the company, are you, Pendarvis?" said the Duke of Twilglenon, with an expression of strangulation darkening his fiery face, as if he had actually felt himself in the grip of a highwayman, and that his pockets were becoming as empty as his head.

"To be sure I am. The Horse Guards are so obtuse that they would never feel the cut of the company without the cut of the sword too."

"I am so sorry," said Lady de Baskerville, who had made several ineffectual attempts during dinner to lure Mr. Phippen into a conversation, and now made a last effort to accomplish that affable and politic measure between the parenthesis of a spoonful of *plombière* ice and a "Georgy dear, lend me your casolette?" "I'm so sorry that it should have so happened that we never met—I mean that young Penrhyn—Shell Penrhyn as they call him since the Balaklava affair—for he is a nephew of mine, and—a—really I feel quite proud of him, for every one says it was one of the most gallant things that ever was done, particularly in such a mere boy."

"I have the honor of knowing his mother," said Mr. Phippen, drily; "and perhaps your Ladyship may wish to express that regret to her? If so, I can give you her address."

"Oh!—a—no,—no—I,—a—that is, there was a coolness between her husband and our branch of the family, and—a—I don't know her;—a—that is, I—a—have never met her at Lord Dunnington's, with whom we are very intimate, and—a—he is her uncle; but—a—I shall make a point of knowing Harcourt when he returns from the Crimea."

"Umph! perhaps he may never return; some other shell may return the compliment and take him up."

"Ah! true, poor fellow," sighed Lady De Baskerville, looking as sentimental as an electric ache, which the ice had sent through all her teeth, could make her, while, from too closely inhaling Lady Georgiana's *casolette*, the aromatic vinegar did the rest, and effectually brought the tears into her eyes; and again she sighed, and this time the sigh was genuine, being the echo of a mental prayer of "I hope to Heaven De Baskerville, in his off-hand good-natured way, won't go and fish out that Harcourt Penrhyn in the Crimea and claim relationship with him on Flo's account." And in order to get rid of so disagreeable an idea, and change the subject, she said aloud to Mr. Phippen—

"I heard you talking of dear Paris to Mr. Mills Bouverie. I suppose, Mr. Phippen, you have travelled a great deal?"

"Too much."

"Too much, oh! one can scarcely travel *too* much."

"I think one may, if one has been shipwrecked."

"And *you* have been shipwrecked," said Lady De Baskerville, clasping her snowy hands in the most interesting manner, and hanging out signals of distress from her still beautiful eyes as she turned them full upon her companion.

"Only once, Madam, only once."

"Surely that was enough?" And the laugh that accompanied this query, though very musical, seemed to ring discordantly in Mr. Phippen's ear, as he replied with some asperity—

"Quite, Madam; only some fools manage to be so twice."

"I have often heard poor Lord de Baskerville (my husband) talk of the terrible wreck of an East Indiaman, called after his mother, 'The Lady de Baskerville;' perhaps it was——"

"Exactly so, Madam," interrupted Mr. Phippen, with a frightful death-rattle sort of laugh; "that *was* the vessel in which I was wrecked."

"How very shocking! And was it in a storm?"

"Storm! Oh, dear, no, Madam! it was on a midsummer night; not a 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' either;—no, it was no dream;—the moon was high in the heavens, and the water—the water, Madam—looked as calm and unruffled as you do now."

"Strange! And how do you account for it?"

"There were syrens, Madam, in that latitude."

"I thought *they* were all a fable?"

"All a fable, indeed!"

Here Lady Georgiana rose, as did the rest of the ladies, to leave the room.

"I shall feel," laughed Lady de Baskerville, as she pushed back her chair, "that I owe you some indemnification all my life, Mr. Phippen, for your having been wrecked in my naughty namesake."

"There are other things besides the National Debt which always *must* be owing, since they never can be paid," murmured he, as the dining-room door closed. He did not return to the drawing-room again that evening, but gained his hotel.

"Set about doing good to somebody," says Howard, the philanthropist; "put on your hat; go and visit the poor; inquire into their wants, and administer unto them; seek out the desolate and oppressed, and tell them of the consolations of religion. I have often tried this, and found it the best medicine for a heavy heart."

And probably Mr. Phippen was following that prescription, as it was a medicine he had long been in the habit of taking; for though it was now twelve at night, he had scarcely got up stairs, and laid his hat upon the table, before, after taking a few hasty turns up and down the room, he again seized it, and putting it on, sallied out.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CRIMEA. THE BOY-HEROES. LOST AND WON. BEFORE AND AFTER THE BATTLE. SAFETY IN NUMBERS, WITH WOUNDS AS WITH EVERY THING ELSE.

SLOW and grey broke the morning of the eighteenth of June, as if unwilling to look upon the grim carnival that Death and War were holding upon the ensanguined plain beneath, and amid wreaths of curling smoke from the batteries, studded, as it were, with those little solid nebulae—which are the *on dits* of bursting shells—and amid the cracking and hissing that confirmed those *on dits*, might be heard along the ranks gasping murmurs of “Murder! Murder!” But death, who like all other tyrants, allows no truths to be told of him with impunity, soon set his icy seal of silence upon these; and other tumults and other silences came and went in quick succession, to complete the ghastly phantasmagoria, in which, as in all other human dramas, the unities were but too well kept; for the *one step* which is ever marring or making events and individuals was here wanting; and from their heights the stern Malakhoff and Redan seemed to look down in contemptuous security at the way in which some of our troops, in crossing the trench, instead of coming upon the open plain in a firm body, were broken into twos and threes, from the want of a temporary step above the herm,* which would have enabled them to have crossed the parapet with regularity, for want of which they had to scramble over it as well as they could; and as the top of the trench was of unequal height and form, their line was quite broken, and the moment they came out of the trench the enemy began to direct a deliberate and well-aimed *mitraille* upon them, which increased the want of order and steadiness caused by their mode of advance. And then, amid the destructive thunders of the indefatigable artillery, there arose—alas! for the last time—a clear, bold, human voice, which had in a hundred hard-fought fields before braved the cannon’s brazen anathemas; and now, to its uttermost powers, it sent forth its last fiat—

“This will never do! Where is the bugler to call them back?”

But, alas! though the last trump was sounding in all directions, and Heaven’s orderly, the Recording Angel, was unerringly marshalling the souls as they came on, there was *no* bugler to be found. Still the gallant old soldier, as his gray hair, like silver banners, caught the breeze, kept with voice and gesture trying to

* See Mr. Russell’s graphic and harrowing account of this, in his admirable letters from the Crimea to *The Times*.

re-form and compose his men; but the deafening denunciations of the enemy's guns so close at hand, and the dim light of the early dawn frustrated all his efforts, and as he rushed along the troubled mass of troops, which were herding together under a shower of grape, and endeavoured to get them in order for a rush at the batteries, which was better than standing still or retreating in a panic, a charge of the murderous missile passed;—and so died, as he had lived, gloriously doing his duty with unflinching courage, the noble, high-hearted Colonel Yea, falling in advance of his men, struck at once in the head and chest by grape-shot. And as he fell, up rose the sun in all its splendour, as if the veteran's indomitable spirit had passed at once from transient to eternal glory. Peace be to his manes! He left after him on that red field *many as brave—none braver.*

"Hallo, old fellow!" cried a young rifleman, rising up from where he had been kneeling close to the abbatis, binding the arm of a wounded Russian soldier, who had fallen from the bastion, with his handkerchief, catching hold, as he spoke, of the coat-tail of an equally youthful infantry officer, who was rushing on, sword in hand.

"Don't stop me, Penrhyn," said the red coat, "for I've sworn I'll be first in at the Redan, unless I'm fricasseed by the way, or my name's not Dunham Massy."

"I understand," laughed Harcourt; "you just want to let the present generation know that there *is* such a name, and give future ones reason to remember it. All right, my boy; go in and win."

"You're the fellow for luck, Penrhyn, for I hear that with only twelve men you took, and, what is better, held a Russian rifle-pit yesterday."

"Pooh! that's nothing; like a mere cannon at billiards. But I'll show you the work I've marked out for myself to-day, so don't go and steal a march upon me. Do you see," continued he, pulling young Massy aside by the lapel of his coat, and pointing to the Malakhoff—"do you see that triangular blue and black rag, waving so insolently over all that we are doing down here?"

"Yes; well?"

"Well, I've taken a great fancy to have it for a pocket-handkerchief, that's all. *Un demi mot au sage.* Still, as you say, if I am *not* fricasseed *en attendant*,—and truly the ground is strewed thick with warnings."

"Out upon them!" exclaimed the other boy-hero, as he added, in the words of Othello, waving his sword—

—'Behold! I have a weapon;
A better never did itself sustain
Upon a soldier's thigh;'—

only I have *not yet* seen the day—but I *must* see it—

'That with this little arm, and this good sword,
I've made my way through more impediments

Than twenty times your stop. But, oh! vain boast!
Who can control his fate?"

And if it is my fate to fall, instead of to conquer, I tell you what, Penrhyn, if the route is changed, and I'm ordered to Heaven, instead of getting into the Redan, send this ring to my mother, will you? And—and—tell her," added the young man, resolutely gulping down the tears that trembled in his voice, and throwing a smile over his face, "that

'It is not in mortals to command success,'

you know."

"I will," said the other, "and I'll also tell her that you 'did more, for that you deserved it.' But I have a mother, too! Well, I must not think of her, or I shall cry, and that will never do, before I get that Russian black and blue pocket-handkerchief. But, pledge for pledge, here's a little ruby heart-shaped ring, with 'THINE' engraved in the centre; it was the first my father ever gave her, and she gave it to me; if I cannot take it, you send it to her, and tell her what it says was the case to the last; and if before sunset I am knocked off, will you—" and he put his hand into his bosom, and hesitated.

Here a bugle sounded sharp and shrill.

"What? Make haste, my good fellow. Anything, everything, you wish."

"No,—nothing,—only the ring to my mother. Good bye! God bless you!"

And hastily they grasped each other's hands for an instant, and then dashed on into the thickest of the *mêlée*. For a short time our batteries and riflemen ceased firing, and the Russians crowded the tops of the parapets of the Redan and the round tower of the Malakhoff; but of course it was dangerous to go out in front of the lines till the enemy had hoisted a flag of truce; yet hearing the piteous groans of a poor dying soldier, entreating for God's sake for a drop of water, Harcourt Penrhyn, seeing a French *tirailleur* running, with a gourd and a bottle in his hand, stopped him.

"*Dis donc, mon brave; as tu par hazard de l'eau là?*"

"*Pardi! mon Capitaine, je crois bien. Dame! avec tous nos spectacles, il n'y a rien qui fait fureur comme 'Le verre d'eau.' A-t-il la vie dure ce verre d'eau?*" laughed the soldier, as he handed the young rifleman his gourd; and, unwarned by the fate of that fine, noble, young officer, Lieutenant Kidd, who had lost his life on a similar humane mission, Harcourt sprang out of the trench into the open, and as he was kneeling down to put the gourd to the dying soldier's lips, a bullet whizzed through the air, and striking him just below the heart, he fell back weltering in his blood. On rushed the masses;—one more—one less—was of no account, for blood flowed plentifully; but the gourd! the gourd was a prize, for water was scarce. For some hours young Penrhyn lay amid

the dead and dying, exhausted from loss of blood, and the pain of his wound increased to agony by the searching rays of the sun. Many had he asked to push him back to the trench, which, by comparison, appeared to him a haven of luxury, but amid the din and tumult his feeble voice could not be heard, till a sailor of the Naval Brigade stepped over him in making his way to the trench, when he touched the man's ankle, which he had not power to grasp, and again uttered his faint petition."

"Aye, aye, Sir!" said the man, and, calling to another of his comrades, they lifted him gently into the trench.

"Thank you, my men. Oh! if I had but one drop of water!"

"I wish as I could get it for you, Sir," said the first man, who had heard him; "but Adam's grog runs shorter than any other here. Hold on there, Jack! Blowed if there ain't a dead Rooshan, with a bottle in his claw. You board him, and see what colours he sails under"

And the other sailor, so ordered, and who was nearest to the dead Russian, loosened his rigid grasp, and took the bottle from him; but, alas, it was not water, and the sailors could not wait, and so hurried on to their work. At length the sun set, red and hazily, as if from the steaming vapours of that purple field; and for a few seconds night hung in black, pall-like clouds over that wide sepulchre, when the moon rose, pale, cold and solemn, unattended by a single star, as if it was her sad privilege to be the solitary watcher of the myriad-dead; and never before had her light revealed such a saturnalia of horrors. Not only every possible attitude, but every possible expression, might there be seen in those rigid statues, which, unlike all other sculpture, instead of being stone imitating flesh, were flesh simulating stone. Here knelt a form with an up-raised rifle aiming at the air, there lay another with an up-lifted arm, as if pointing to the ghastly legions around that Heaven was still to be scaled. One with great sightless eyes glared on the night, and let it look on them; while another, close beside it, lay with such calm close lids that its very mother might have thought it only slept, and would wake and smile on her to-morrow. And now and then, as the pale light above them moved on, might be seen some hideously distorted face, as if the fell fiend had had a fearful struggle to wrest from the fleshy ambush its forfeit soul. But, as a happy contrast to this, were others whose chiselled features lay so hushed and beautiful in death that they looked as if their ransomed spirits had but that moment soared upon some angel's wings to their eternal home, leaving their corporeal garments there as being too cumbrous to take. But for one and all the only requiem *then* was the fresh sea breeze, which passed over them like a chilliad sigh from many lands—a last message from many homes—which *they* would see no more. And beyond, on the wild world of waters, in the roads of Sevastopol, might be seen goodly ships, with their sails spread, like large-

winged birds; and nearer in, towards land, was one coquettish little craft, from whose pinnace, beside the Union Jack, waved a green and white silken flag. She not only—

“Walked the waters like a thing of life,”

but she also seemed agitated with human hopes and fears, for on her deck might be seen a slight female figure looking intently through a telescope which was directed towards the shore, and presently the boat was lowered, and manned by a crew of four sailors; and then another man, in a rough Neapolitan boat-coat, with a pointed *capuchin* hood to it, sprang in amongst them, after which the boat pushed off, and the measured strokes of the oars kept time, as it were, to the beating heart of the figure on deck who stood gazing after them.

The vessel was “The Esmeralda,” Lord De Baskerville’s yacht. The man who had sprung the last into the boat was its owner, who, ever from the memorable shell affair at Balaklava, had found out and claimed (as his mother had dreaded) relationship with Harcourt, who had never accepted his cousin’s invitation to sleep a single night on board his yacht, as he would not absent himself from his post. Still, one way or another, he had seen, between balls at Lord Stratford De Redcliffe’s, and the plays acted by the Zouaves, and various excursions to be made, a great deal of his beautiful cousin Florida, perhaps a great deal too much for the peace of both; for, besides Harcourt’s high and strictly honorable nature, which alone would have deterred him from bringing a girl bred up in all the sybarite luxury of artificial wants into the struggles, lowerings, and privations inseparable from the position of a penniless soldier of Fortune, who had yet his way to win, and nothing to help him to do so but his high heart and his good right arm. *These*, in the French army, it is true, would have been all-sufficient to have carved out any career, however great—to have planted whole wildernesses of laurel, and to have reaped them after; but in ours, having neither patronage nor parentage, they might, indeed, if the chances of war left him a cripple, procure him a crutch—that only *bâton* our economical and exclusive system awards to the bravest of the brave, who have *but* their courage and their conduct to plead for them. And as one among many flagrant modern instances of this, look at that heroic stripling, “Redan Massy,” as he is deservedly called; for had he been the two Scipios and Bayard and Condé girded into one, his young arm and antique spirit could not have achieved greater prodigies of valour. And has he not been rewarded? Yes, by the admiration of all Europe, the archives of his own conscience, and a graceful and well-merited testimonial from Trinity College, Dublin.

And the Government?

It has not interfered to prevent his accepting any of *these* rewards, nor have we heard that it has curtailed his pay for being crippled

for life; perhaps, even in its retrenching *furor*, it considers this sufficient curtailing; *mais voila tout*, honors are *not* to be wasted on those who can help *themselves* so lavishly to them.

But, to return to the other boy hero. Harcourt Penrhn, exclusive of his own individual position, which precluded his thinking of taking Florinda for a wife, loved his mother with too much devotion of gratitude, too much holiness of respect, to think of entering a family (though his own) who had treated her with such contumely and neglect; and yet there were moments, when, in the presence of Florinda, and under the influence of those bewildering eyes of hers, prudence, principle, filial affection, gratitude, everything gave way! The world was wide, but in all its boundless expanse there appeared but two human beings—Florinda and himself! Then, horrified at his egotism, he would sum up her mother's failings, endow *her* with them *all*, and *try* to hate her. But hatred, like love, will *not* be *hidden*; so finding *that* impossible, he would then absent himself for days.

But never yet could love be concealed where it exists, and the efforts generally made to conceal it are so awkward, so exaggerated, that they, treacherously, only make it the more apparent. Notwithstanding, therefore, Harcourt's unequal manner, its sudden coldness, nay, almost rudeness at times, Florinda knew—that is, she *felt*—that he loved her. On her side there were not the same reasons for avoiding him, as she had never even heard him or his mother alluded to by her own family; and when she recognized Harcourt as the original of the picture she had seen worn by the lady she met at the Euston Square terminus, and that in a fit of heroic and Spartan virtue, thinking that would place an effectual barrier between them, he had confessed that his mother was Sir Gregory Kempenfelt's governess, Florinda replied, with generous candour and perfect truth—

"She is still *our* relation, and you *are* my cousin; and I like her all the better for her honest independence."

In truth we are ashamed to confess that being, like her elder brother, determind not to sacrifice herself in marriage, and, therefore, having but little respect for her mother's ambitious designs, and thinking that Lady Mabel's marriage ought to be quite sufficient to satisfy her on that head; we greatly fear that could she only have been *quite* sure that Harcourt *did* love her, were it not for maidenly modesty she would have reversed the order of things in words (as so many English misses do by their *acts* of devotion and attention to men), and have offered him herself and her twenty thousand pounds, which, like all young persons who know only the abuse and not the use of money, she thought, without carriages and horses and gold plate, which of course (at that age) she did not care for, how happy Harcourt, his mother and herself might be for life in a dear little cottage *ornée*, all thatched at the top, all roses in the front, and a moon like the Irishman's, which,

by subscription, should be lighted up *all* the year round. Indeed, she had even gone as far as *saying* that when she was of age she should take a cottage of her own, and then she would ask that dear beautiful *cousin Mary* of hers to come and live with her, and she should no longer be governess to any one. But it invariably happened after one of these forward speeches that Harcourt was more distant, more impenetrable than ever; nay, sometimes he actually frowned and bit his lips as he turned away. And thus thrown back upon herself, reproved, almost rejected, the generous, devoted girl would suddenly be lashed into the chafed, proud woman, who had franchised every barrier for one whose only return was a stern though silent hint, that the sooner she replaced them the better. After any of these scenes what suffered most, next to herself, was her pocket-handkerchiefs, which were mercilessly torn asunder as she would (could he have got at it) have torn her own abject heart for having led her into such folly and humiliation: and the St. Bartholomew of these *lingerie* innocents caused the despair of Mademoiselle Ernestine, her maid, who would soliloquize over their fragmentary *chef d'œuvres* of *broderie*.

"Ah! certes, mi ladi, est un vrai bourreau d'argent, de déchirer de si bels mouchoirs, pour les quels Mlle. Félicie lui a fait payer, Dieu sait quoi!"

But with the double shrewdness of her sex and country, she was not long in suspecting that these poor handkerchiefs were the scapegoats of a *grande passion*, consequently as the destruction increased so did *her* commentaries, which for the most part were—

"Ah! ma foi! il faut qu'il soit bête comme Dieu est puissant. Ce petit militaire, avec ses beaux yeux, pour ne pas voir que miladi ne désire pas mieux que de tout sacrifier pour lui, y-compris elle même; puisque les demoiselles en Angleterre font la cour, et se marie à leur gré; pourtant c'est drôle ça comme se les hommes en valaient la peine!"

But notwithstanding Harcourt's reserve during the many months they had now known him, and his aguish hot and cold-fits, there had never been the slightest skirmish from which he had escaped unscathed, that he had not, however late at night, either rowed out or sent to "The Esmeralda" to report his safety; but now, after that dreadful day, when the cannon had scarcely ceased for a moment, and their dense smoke had enveloped the surrounding country like a veil of grey crape, he neither came nor sent. What could it mean?

Suspense, though in one way so dreadful, yet in attendance on the possibility of a horrible and irrevocable catastrophe is a boom, a positive angel-visit—for where there's doubt there's hope; and at best, in this poor little life, which for some is unrounded even by a dream, "What," as Miss Jawsbury truly says, "are hopes but inverted fears?" While we are in suspense, too, both body and mind are active, and peripatetic grief is never insupportable;

it is not till we are felled by some colossal *certainty* of consummated evil, and truth is seated in that desolate Carthage, a broken heart, that we perceive that we are surrounded by the stupendous ruins of *all* our hopes.

Florinda and her brother had paced that deck nearly the whole day; he had talked, she had listened—but it was not to him, it was to that murderous artillery, which, to her torturing fears, seemed to endow Harcourt with ten thousand lives, only to subject him to ten thousand deaths. But at length, when the sun set, and the moon rose, and still he neither came nor sent, Lord de Baskerville said, in a low, hoarse voice—

“Flo’, dear, you had better go down below; I’m going on shore.”
 “Let me go with you!” murmured she faintly, as she laid her hand upon his wrist, which, even through his coat, he could feel was cold as death.

“No, no, dear; *that’s* impossible,” said he, resolutely; “go down below, there’s a darling.”

“Only let me stay here, then,” said she, sinking down on a bench, and leaning her head against one of the port-holes.

“Well, I’ll send you up some wraps.”

And down he went, first into the state-cabin, where he found the doctor stretched upon a couch, deep in Dumas’ *Paul Jones*.

“Do you know, Ross,” said Lord De Baskerville, “I’m terribly afraid that something has happened to poor Penrhyn, and I want you to come on shore with me.”

“God bless me! I hope not,” and the doctor flung down his book; “but if your Lordship will allow me to suggest, I had better remain here, and get all my apparatus ready; for if the worst has happened, which Heaven forbid, I can be of no use; and if it is only a wound, and a curable one, he ought not to be moved after it is dressed, or the ball extracted. And I’ll see a berth got ready.”

“Berth! oh, no! let him have the state-bed, it will be so much larger and more comfortable.”

“So it will; and it is very good of your Lordship to give it up; but as Lady Florinda’s is only a small French bedstead, perhaps if that were brought into the second cabin that would be better and more airy.”

“Well, whatever is best; and Florinda can have mine.”

“I advise you to take some bandages and lint, and a hunting-flask of weak brandy and water.”

And these preliminaries arranged, the boat, as we have already described, pushed off; and though *one* of the youthful heroes had redeemed his self-imposed pledge, and *was* first in at the Redan!—which we were now in possession of—still, the oars of “The Esmeralda’s” boat were muffled as they had so long been accustomed to be, and on reaching the beach Lord De Baskerville left two sailors with the boat, taking the two others with the cushions and two oars, to make a sort of temporary litter, in case they should be successful in their search.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DRUNKEN SOLDIER. THE VIVANDIERE. THE LOST FOUND. NEW ANATOMICAL PHENOMENON; OR, THE DOCTOR PUZZLED.

THOUGH not more than nine o'clock when Lord De Baskerville had set out, it was past one before Florinda, who had never moved from the seat where he had left her, perceived, more with a sort of spiritual *clairvoyance* than by her physical sight, the long watched-for boat returning; but as the moon was now waning, and thick clouds gathering for rain, only the eyes of the heart would so soon have descried that long coffin-like phantom skimming the waters, and have *seen* the strokes of those muffled oars that could not be heard. For a moment every pulsation which had been so tumultuous before, was suspended, as she breathlessly counted, returning, but the five that went!—till the boat neared, and the companion-ladder was lowered, and she then heard her brother say:—

"Gently, gently," to the men in the boat; afterwards telling those above to be in readiness to help them as they ascended the ladder.

Her first impulse was to kneel down and silently thank God!—for speak she could not; then, leaning over the side, her whole being seemed concentrated in her ears; for after all it might be but a corse that they were thus silently and solemnly raising, as the great dead—who are angels then—should ever be tended.

As the two sailors that came backward first up the companion-ladder with their burthen, an unintentional jerk they gave, caused him to groan.

"Oh, thank God!" escaped from her lips now, not only in words, but almost in a shriek; for never were tidings more glad!—never was music more sweet to mortal ear than was that suffering moan to that poor trembling girl; for is not suffering the strongest of all proofs of life?

Mr. Ross, though a cannie, long-headed Scotchman, had also a kind heart, and being greatly addicted to the reading of romances, and by no means deficient in the perceptive organs, he had a pretty clear idea of the state of the case between the young hero of Balaklava, and the flower of Belgravia; so, just as the sailors reached the deck with their freight, he said to the latter—

"If your ladyship will go down below, I'll be sure to let you have the first *bulletin* of your *cousin*," as he kindly and emphatically called him, to legitimize, as it were, her irrepressible anxiety about him, and make it appear perfectly orthodox to the bystanders.

"And I have no doubt," continued the doctor, "that it will be a favourable one. Meanwhile, let me prescribe for you, and prevail upon your ladyship to retire to rest, first taking a tumbler of very hot, white-wine negus."

She made no difficulty about following his advice; as she felt, if not relieved by a flood of tears, that her heart would burst. So she hurried down to her cabin just as Harcourt once more reached the deck of "The Esmeralda."

As soon as they got him down-stairs, Dr. Ross ordered him to be laid on a large dining-table, and the first thing he did was to sponge his face and hands from a large basin of vinegar and water that he had there ready, and then loosen his uniform. Considerably revived by these ablutions, he opened his languid eyes, and seeing Lord De Baskerville, he slightly pressed his hand—a movement that did not escape the doctor's lynx eye.

"I must thank your lordship to leave us till I have done all that ought to be done and got him into bed, which you see is all turned down ready; but even a look, in his present state, may agitate and excite him too much; and I'll let you know as soon as you may return."

Lord De Baskerville was gone in a moment. And then Dr. Ross proceeded to cut the uniform off piecemeal, for it was so saturated with blood that had his patient been able to sit up it could scarcely have been got off in any other way; he then found the wound was luckily about an inch and a half below the heart, and having sponged away the coagulated blood with tepid water before he had even begun to feel for the ball, Harcourt drew a long breath, and said—

"Oh! what a relief."

"Well I hope, my fine fellow, we shall soon relieve you more," and as the doctor continued his manipulations he at length said—

"What the deuce is this?" and, gently drawing it out of the wound, added—

"It looks like a glove; but, by Jove! whatever it is, it has saved your life by turning the ball aside," and he flung the red gauntlet away to the other end of the table.

"No, no, give it to me," said Harcourt feebly.

"Oh! I perceive," said the doctor, with a quiet smile, beginning to fancy that he understood how such a thing came to be in so strange a place. "*Gratitude* for its having saved your life! Umph! I remember when I was at school," added he, continuing his operation, "that we used to read that after the battle of Mantinea, when Epaminondas was carried into his tent wounded, the first thing he asked for on recovering his senses was his shield, which, being brought to him, he kissed. Then, to be sure, it was considered infamous among the Greeks and Romans for a soldier to return from battle without his shield, and, perhaps, there are some modern regulations about gloves, that I'm ignorant of. Ah! come, that's

something like; I've got you, you villain; and they may talk as they like about having the ball at one's foot, but as long as Fate makes nothing of one but a poor devil of a surgeon, and sends one amid wars and rumours of wars, it's quite as satisfactory to have it sometimes in one's hand. How do you feel now, eh?" said he, holding up the bullet; "don't wish me to put it back in the place I found it, do you?"

"Oh! what a relief."

"Now, have the goodness not to move a finger till I return, which will be in half a moment." And ringing a hand-bell, Doctor Ross opened the door, where he found Lord De Baskerville and his valet both waiting.

"My Lord, I'm come to borrow a shirt from you, and as I know all young ladies are fond of *balls*—Miles, give this to *Mamzelle Ernestine* to take to Lady Florinda with my compliments, and say her cousin will be quite ready for the first Mazurka or any thing else, if she will do him the honor of holding herself disengaged for this day month."

"Nonsense! you don't mean to say you have extracted it already?"

"Seeing's believing; but I must go back. Miles, the shirt if you please, as quick as possible; and then come and help me to get Mr. Penrhyn into bed."

"As soon as Doctor Ross had sent out word that his patient was in bed, and had dropped off into a quiet and profound sleep, not having for so many months enjoyed the most kindly luxury in life, a good bed, with nice fresh linen sheets, Florinda sat on a low stool beside the couch, upon which her brother had thrown himself, to hear the particulars of how he had, at length, and by the merest accident through a French *Vivandière* found Harcourt. He spared her the details of the horrors he had waded through, and his almost hopelessness, amid such a *macedoine* of dead and dying, of finding the one he was in search of, especially as that dark Rifle uniform, and the slightness of the wearer, rendered him less conspicuous than those in red, though the moon was shining as bright as day.

"But I took one of the oars, and touched every heap that I passed," said he, "and when any uttered a sound, I despatched Reeves and Jackson to try and find some sort of conveyance to have the poor creatures removed. When I came to the trench the sight was too horrible, for it looked like a *Campo Santo* turned inside out; and there, as I could not go below the surface, I probed in vain. I then made the tour of the open as far as I could, and was returning in despair, fearing he might have fallen inside the Redan;—but, determined to stay there all night and wait the morning's light——"

Here Florinda kissed his forehead.

"And just as I got back to the trench, I saw a French *chasseur*

d'Afrique, exceedingly drunk, trying to achieve three impossibilities, namely, to stand steadily by balancing himself on his heels, to catch hold of the *vivandière*, whom he was importuning for *encore une goutte*, and to sing, in the midst of a most insubordinate hiccup—

“ Mon système est d'aimer le bon vin
Nos amis, la dame qui nous aime,
Quelque peu d'ouvrage, et point de chagrin
Voilà le vrai bien ; ou je n'y connais rien ;
Dinga ! dinga ! dinga ! dinga ! dong !
Ah ! que j'aime à sonner un batême !
À Messieurs les maris j'en demande pardon ;
Dinga ! dinga !—(Hiccup.)

“ Veux tu nous ficher le camp ? Avec ton gremlin de dinga ! dinga ! dinga !” cried the *vivandière*.

“ Donne moi donc une toute petite goutte ? Elle est là ! elle est là ! elle est là ! morbleu ! (Hiccup.) Chacun le sait, chacun le dit ; le régiment (hiccup) est le diable à quatre (hiccup) pour boire (hiccup), et se battre (hiccup), et faire le vert gallant. Tal—lal—de—ral—lal—la ! (Hiccup.)”

“ Qui t'avise, imbécile ?” cried she, giving him a box on the ear, which laid him prostrate, as he made an attempt forcibly to possess himself of her canteen.

“ Pardon, mon bon Monsieur,” said she, addressing me ; ‘ mais si vous voudriez avoir la complaisance de m'aider, il y'a un pauvre jeune officier Anglais là bas, affeublé le de cadavres ; et je sais bien qu'il vit encore lui, car il pousse des gémissements, voyez vous, c'est à en fendre le cœur !’

“ I was only too glad to follow her, as the very words ‘ young officer’ gave me hopes, especially as she spoke of his groans, and we had not gone far before she stopped about the middle of the trench.

“ Ecoutez !” said she.

“ And, sure enough, I heard a faint groaning, but evidently proceeding only from one sufferer. The first body we dragged off the heap was that of a French colonel, covered with orders ; but, poor fellow, he was quite gone.

“ Eh ! Seigneur Dieu !” said the *vivandière*, shrugging her shoulders, and looking piteously at him, ‘ c'est bien le cas de dire’—

“ Toi tous sont égaux : je ne te dois plus rien
Je suis sur mon fumier, comme toi sur le tien !”

“ Comme dit le bonhomme de Caen.”

“ We went on with our melancholy work, till we had extracted about four, when a groan, or rather a loud respiration, like a person breathing suddenly more freely, assured us we had come to what we were seeking ; and as we raised him out of the trench, I

asked the vivandière how she came to know he was there, hidden by so many? She said—

“ Dame! Monsieur en m’en allant là bas, il n’y avait que deux cadavres au-dessus de ce pauvre enfant; et j’ai vu cette jeune tête à travers le bras, d’un pauvre vieillard.”

“ It was, indeed, poor Penrhyn, who, without opening his eyes, murmured, ‘Oh! thank you.’ I had but three Napoleons and two roubles in my waistcoat pocket, which I slipped into the good vivandière’s hand; but for a long time she indignantly rejected them, saying—

“ Allons donc, Monsieur! est-ce que ces choses-là se payent? à la guerre, comme à la guerre, il faut bien s’aider les uns les autres.”

“ A la bonne heure,” said I, “mais pour boire à la santé de notre trouvaille; nous autres Anglais, nous avons une superstition: que rien ne réussit sans le pour boire.”

“ Ah! dame! c’est une autre affaire; mais pourtant, Monsieur, le vin n’est pas si cher,” said she, still returning the gold, and only keeping the roubles till I again pressed them into her hand with a joke, saying—

“ Qui sait? il peut devenir cher, car vous savez ce que dit Beranger?”

“ Si on mettait à l’eau fraîche,
Toute fille qui pêche
L’eau fraîche, serait à la fin,
Plus cher que le vin!”

“ Dame! quant à cela, Monsieur, si on mettait à l’eau fraîche tous les hommes qui pêchent! vin et eau seraient bientôt hors de prix!” laughed she. By this time the men had constructed a litter with the oars and cushions, and we lifted poor Penrhyn on to it as gently as we could. I saw there was nothing the matter with his arms, and therefore thought it better not to open his coat, for fear of doing mischief; but with all our care his groans were terrible as we lifted him up, and I began lamenting that there was no araba or any kind of conveyance to take him down to the boat, till the vivandière consoled me with the presence of mind and good sense of her country, by saying—

“ Ma foi Monsieur, je crois que la haquenée des cordeliers* lui secouera bien moins.”

“ And having given him a little brandy and water, which appeared to revive him, we moved on, but not before I had cordially shaken the little vivandière’s hand, and thanked her again and again.

“ De rien mon beau, Monsieur,” said she; “ma mère était vivandière avec la grande armée, et je chasse bien de race, voilà tout. Ce sera un fichu compliment! de vous dire! au revoir! ainsi adieu, Monsieur!”

* Going on foot.

"Adieu, ma bonne ! Vive l'Empereur !"

"De tout mon cœur, Vive l'Empereur !" echoed she. "Vous voulez dire Napoléon Troisième ? et vive l'autre aussi, Napoléon Premier (et premier de Empereurs !) quand même il est mort !"

"And so we parted ; and, as you know the rest, Flo', now go to bed."

"How I should like to see that vivandière !" said she, as she rose to wish her brother good night, or rather morning.

"No doubt," smiled he ; "but as it would be a million chances to one that you found her, I advise you *not* to set off upon such a wild goose chase."

"Don't be impertinent, Sir," said she, slapping one of his cheeks, as she kissed the other.

The next morning Dr. Ross's *bulletin* was equally favourable. His patient had had a good night, and was considerably easier ; or, as Harcourt himself expressed it, he had been in Heaven, without exactly knowing how he got there.

But both Florinda and her brother had work to do before breakfast, late as it had been when they had gone to bed. Lord de Baskerville's was to report Harcourt as dangerously wounded, at head-quarters, and obtain for him six months' leave ; Florinda's to write to his mother, in all haste, stating his safety and progression towards convalescence, that she might receive this letter before she saw the official list of the killed and wounded, and she wrote accordingly :—

"On board 'The Esmeralda' Yacht,

"Off Sevastopol, June 19th, 1855.

"My dear Cousin Mary,—

"Forgive me for not addressing you with due formality as Mrs. Penrhyn ; but I like the former mode of accosting you so much better, as it seems more like *you*. I hasten to tell you not to be alarmed at the *fact* you will see in the papers of my cousin Harcourt's being wounded ; for the ball was extracted last night, which night he slept through most comfortably, and Dr. Ross says he is going on most favourably, with less fever than he ever knew from a similar wound. But I have no doubt you would like to know all about it, and *exactly* how my brother was fortunate enough to find him after that dreadful action of yesterday." (And here she recapitulated the same graphic description which Lord De Baskerville had given her on the previous night.) "Should you not like to see that good vivandière ? Dr. Ross says nothing will re-establish cousin Harcourt's strength so soon as change of air ; so we are going to cruise about, and I dare say, in a short time, he will be able to write to you himself, only Ross is such a medical martinet (very properly) that while there is the shadow of a shadow of danger in his exerting himself, even that much, I am sure he will not let him do it ; so you must be content with me for your '*own correspondent*' till the *bulletins* cease to be issued.

Do you know, I knew my cousin the moment I saw him, from the likeness of that picture you wore the only time we ever met, at Euston Square, that morning. Oh! how sorry I am that I did not *then* know who you were; but if you are only half as kind and compassionate as you look, I shall make up for lost time; so tell Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, with my kind regards, not to fancy that he is going to keep you all to himself, for, that as soon as ever I am my own mistress, I am going to take a cottage. But, as it will not be proper for me to live by myself—that is, to be my own chaperon—and mamma hates the country, you *must* return good for evil, and come and take care of me. I forgot to tell you that De Baskerville has asked for six months' leave for our poor wounded, not exactly Hussar, but Rifleman, which, as there is no doubt of his obtaining, I dare say England will be our destination very soon, but not till all traces of the effects of that horrid wound have been flung to the winds either of the Bosphorus or Egean, where we think of weighing anchor for, to-morrow. Oh! here come those tiresome mail bags; so good bye, for to-day, my dear cousin Mary. Don't hate me for my *name's* sake, but believe me *de cœur*,

"Your sincerely affectionate,

"FLORINDA ANDOVER."

CHAPTER XXII.

LETTERS FROM "OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT." THE "MAN OF ROSS" MAKES A SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY, AND, OF COURSE, AS THE NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF SO DOING, THREATENS TO WRITE TO "THE TIMES."

HAPPINESS, like pleasure, is a game for which it is vain to seek; it must start before us or we never find it, and the reason is, perhaps, that all that is most exquisite in nature—whether in feeling, sentiment, perception, or sensation—is, to a certain degree—that is, beyond a certain point—*indefinable*. The lover, for instance, is generally at a loss to *define*—even where great personal attraction exists—the *exact* point from whence the electric thrill came, which at once revolutionized and subjugated his whole being; and yet this could not be the case if even beauty itself depended upon any known or fixed rule of proportion. Shape, colour, feature, and expression, may be all confessedly beautiful to *every* eye, or they may be so to *none*, save to him or her whose heart has *luminated* them; but in either case where the spell has wrought, those under its influence will tell you that it is something that they cannot analyze—something *not* restricted to any one portion of what they admire, but diffused over the whole, and will call it sweetness, fascination,

lovableness, or any other name which connects beauty with sentiment, and expresses a charm which is not peculiar to any set of features, though it is, perhaps, possible to all. But, as if Nature in every thing delighted in asserting her own omnipotent spontaneity, and demonstrating the arrogant fallacies of all human preconcerted programmes, how often does it happen that those whom Love selects as delegates of his power to bring us chained in the most abject bondage so as to swell his triumphs, are diametrically opposite, in every respect, even in the leading lure of outward form, to that *theoretical* divinity we had set up for our future worship, whenever realization should approach to it. "There are two causes," says an old writer, "to be considered of civil wars. The one secret, which, as it is neither known nor seen, so it cannot be hindered nor remedied. It is Destinie the Will of God. * * * * * *In se magna ruunt, letis hunc numina rebus crescenti posuere modum.*" And this is all that can be said of that worst of civil wars—LOVE! For what is a house or a state compared with a heart divided against itself? For the house may find friends to arbitrate between its feuds; the state, patriots to quell its commotions; but the best heads—and more especially its *own*!—can only misjudge in causes belonging to the jurisdiction of the heart.

As a proof of the truth of that world-old axiom, that events which have the appearance of misfortunes often prove a happy source of future felicity, one little month before that bright July day saw him cruising about Propontis and the Euxine, Harcourt Penrhyn's wildest dreams could not have pictured the present reality of his being there upon that couch, Florinda anticipating his every wish, reading to him, singing to him, watching him, nursing him—all of which, as long as his strength failed, he thought a delightful way of dying—a happy preparatory school for Heaven;—but now that his strength was beginning to return, the dragon Duty, and the harpy Necessity, those grim belligerents, were once more assailing his inward citadel, so that the civil war (ten thousand times worse than the outward one from which he had just escaped) was raging. Reason indeed is generally an unequal antagonist to passion, and philosophers will advise that some stronger passion should be opposed to it; but if such can be found, then the passion so opposed is not love. Harcourt made many attempts at this moral economy, by throwing the recollection of his mother into the breach; but at length familiarity weakened the potency of this spell, and he had nothing for it but to arm Florinda's welfare against Florinda's self; and he so far succeeded as to resolve to go to Scutari and be nursed there, and so prove to himself that if love can soften too much, it can also elevate. Every true faith has its martyrs. Yes, he *would* go; far better to die there, of mere bodily wounds, than to remain here, struggling against every torture, and calling it happiness. Thank Heaven! up to that time he

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had had sufficient self-command never even to have availed himself of the dog's privilege to kiss the little hand that fed him; and then she called him Cousin Harcourt, and even Harcourt, without the cousin, and shook up his pillows, making an atmosphere of freshness and gentleness around him, like the west wind; and yet, had it been upas-laden, it could not have been more deadly to him, for his senses seemed to reel into faintness under it; when, ten thousand times worse, she would then bathe his temples with some *Felsina*, or Eau de Cologne and water, till he would cry out, "No! no!" and bury his face in the pillows, as if he had been stung by an adder, and at such times poor Florinda, who was ever at her post to

"Explain the thought, explore the asking eye,"

and answer with some little act of kindness, would, at this supposed rebuff, feel the tears gush to her eyes, thinking she had not "done her spiriting" sufficiently gently; for true delicacy, like true generosity, is always more wounded by an offence from itself than to itself.

And seeing her tears, he would, as he put his hands to his head, as if writhing under some indescribable torture, say—

"Oh! what a brute you *must* think me; but whatever you think, don't think me ungrateful."

And then he would ask her to read, or to sing to him, as if, as long as there was any space between them, he might gaze upon that exquisitely beautiful face with impunity, forgetting that Love's poison is of the true old Venetian subtilty, and penetrates through the eyes and ears more surely than by any other way. And now, as he lay there alone, his eyes closed (for Florinda had left him with an injunction to try and sleep), and his beautifully-chiselled and delicate features, which were still pale as marble, forming, but for his dark chestnut hair, scarcely a contrast to the pillow on which they rested, he would, with all the accessories, have made a charming picture; for the dressing-gown in which he was wrapped was a dark purple velvet, one of Lord De Baskerville's, and through the open windows, just above the sofa, might be seen the dolphins rolling and bounding through the blue waves, now golden with the setting sun, while on a large table beside the couch, covered with a Persian carpet, was a white aram-shaped glass filled with flowers, and two silver filigree baskets, one laden with grapes and figs, the other with mulberries gathered from those very trees on the plain under Mount Olympus in which Tamerlane defeated Bajazet, and all brought fresh from thence that morning. Besides a profusion of books and a piece of half-finished embroidery, there was on a smaller table near it a most magnificent narguile, with its equally gorgeous silver-gilt basin for the rose-water, which Lord De Baskerville had bought at Constantinople, but which he had never been allowed to smoke; and on an ottoman in the centre of the

cabin was a guitar, which, whether from sporting his colours in the shape of a blue-ribbon, or from a particular love to that instrument, Pataponffe now lay curled up fast asleep beside. At the other end of the cabin was a piccolo piano, of a most exquisite tone, the outside being inlaid with green and white, ivory and silver, while the sconces for the candles were branches of coral; and, thanks to a plentiful supply of mignonette boxes in the windows, and an occasional burning of seraglio amulets, there was nothing marine in the atmosphere. Lord De Baskerville was gone to Nicea, to try and pick up a few antiquities, either from the ruins of Pliny's Theatre or elsewhere, and meant to pass the night there; so that, as Dr. Ross expressed it, there was nobody but Lady Florinda and himself left to "keep house."

And now the cabin-door gently opened, and Florinda entered with a basin of arrow-root in her hand, followed by Dr. Ross. Harcourt opened his eyes—for he was not sleeping, and it was almost a relief to him to see that Florinda was accompanied by the doctor; for Love, being the most Jesuitical of all the passions, is ever deluding itself, and the very same temptations from which it heroically flies under *one* name, re-christened by sophistry with another, it madly rushes to meet; and so, upon the supposed safety that exists in numbers, the same lips and eyes that were so fatally dangerous alone, were, in the presence of others, looked out for as a Phæros, towards which his every look and thought would steer.

"I hear," said she, approaching him and uncovering the arrow-root, "that somebody has been *very* naughty and did not eat his arrow-root two hours ago."

"And," chimed in Dr. Ross with his broad Scotch accent, "*af* somebody is not able to eat arrow-root, of *coorse* he's not able to *rade* latters (letters), of which I have two for him."

"From England!" said Harcourt, rising himself on his elbow.

"No, no, *nat* from *England*, only from that *dom—d* Sevastapol."

"Oh! *da* give them to me, for I hope one is from Massy."

"*Wel, wal, whan* I see the last of *that* arrow-root ye shall have the latters."

And accordingly Harcourt began with the utmost rapidity to swallow spoonful after spoonful of the arrow-root which Florinda still held for him, keeping his eyes fixed on her the while, with such a look of adoration, that, to say the least of it, was very unfair and almost bordering on the impious, considering his lips had never uttered any prayer of the kind.

"Eh! I did na say ye war to choke yourself with the arrow-root," said the doctor; "for I don't *wal* see *hoo* ye can *rade* yer latters if ye do."

"I want to give you a good beating at chess, Dr. Ross," said Florinda, to call him off.

"Naxt to reckoning one's chickens before they are hatched, proclaiming one's victories before they are won is aboot the most

foolish thing I know, particularly in time of war; but I cannot have the honor of accepting yer ladyship's challenge *thees* evening, as I am *beesy* upon a new discovery I have made *respacting* gunshot wounds."

"Indeed! is it too scientific for us to understand?"

"Oh! no, it's sample (simple) and plain enough to the humblest capacity, or I should *naver* have discovered it;" and here the doctor's grin corresponded with his accent. "Yer ladyship knows what buffing the keys (keys) of a piano is?"

"Yes—well?"

"Wal, ye see whan a bullet is covered wi lather (leather) in like monner, only it must be kad (kid) or glove-lather, the ball is rebuffed, or turned aside."

"But do they ever cover bullets with leather?" asked Florinda in great surprise.

"Not generally, but I have known it done with great effect; and that's just the *amprovement* I mean to write to *The Times* about, and suggest to the Board of Ordnance, because I thank (think)—"

"Do, for Heaven's sake, my dear doctor, give me my letters!" broke in Harcourt, his pale face now crimson.

"But really I should like to hear this improvement more fully explained," said the innocent Florinda.

"Another time," said the doctor, slowly taking the letters out of his coat pocket, and looking at poor Harcourt, as he did so, with a grotesque and contradictory expression of solemn comicality, "another time; for I see the subject is too *arciting* to my patient there. Here are yer letters, Mr. Penrhyn; and I'll just wait to hear what the news is from that infernal place, and if they've got hold of the devil by the tail yet."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Harcourt, again becoming deadly pale, as he looked hastily first at the superscription of one letter and then at the other; "neither of these are from Massy;" and for a moment he put his hand to his forehead, and then tore one open which he knew by the hand-writing to be from a young man of the name of Wilmot, in the 19th, and who was a mutual friend of his and young Massy's, but no sooner had he read the first lines, than he cried out—

"Good God! is it possible? Poor fellow! There was no iron about him, but the unalloyed gold of a thorough gentleman, and the chivalric spirit of a true soldier. Doctor, have the goodness to read this letter out, for I really cannot."

Dr. Ross took the letter, which had been travelling about after Harcourt, and was dated—

"Before Sevastopol, June 29th."

It ran as follows:—

"My dear Penrhyn,

"It is with the most sincere grief, which the whole army

feels as with one heart, that I have to inform you that poor Lord Raglan died last night. The immediate cause of his death was diarrhoea, ending in cholera, brought on, no doubt, by the constant strain upon mind and body, and the responsibility of a mismanagement which he had no power either to remedy or prevent, added to the death of his friend, poor General Eastcourt, to whom he was much attached; and this may be considered as the last straw that broke the camel's back, alias the last blow that broke the poor old Field-Marshal's heart. Peace be with him! He may find many as good where he is gone, but certainly has left none better after him. If it had *even* been a cannon ball;—but that d——d cholera! Well, there's no use in thinking about it. As I take it for granted, you have long ago got my letter of the 22nd, telling you how poor Massy was riddled at the Redan, I will now only tell you that I have been three times to see him. He is going on favourably as to safety; but, poor fellow! I fear he will be a cripple for life; but as he may fairly count every wound as a victory, it will be an infernal shame* if, in regard to him, Government follow their usual plan of leaving virtue to be its own reward, and doing nothing for him. Each time I have seen him his 'Take care of Doubt' has been, 'Tell Penrhyn' something or other about a ring; all the ins and outs of which, I'm ashamed to say, I forget; but the upshot of it, I know, was, that you were to keep the ring still, as you are in safe quarters (not so safe, neither, you sly dog! if that Lady Florinda Andover is such an houri as they say. Truly, smooth water runs deep; and trust you quiet fellows for always getting the lion's share! By Jove! if I could only get leave, I would give myself a *chance*, at all events, and try what boarding 'The Esmeralda' as a corsair, doing the romantic, and carrying off your Medora *vi et armis*, would do for me.)"

The doctor's national discretion luckily prevented his rushing rashly into a parenthesis; therefore this one he skipped, thinking that the only person for whom it was intended could "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" it at his leisure, and so wound up in the most natural manner imaginable, apparently continuing to read, without any interregnum—

"Of course you don't expect anything like pleasant news from this d——d place, where the old story is always going on. Our fellows (at least as many as are left of them) are pretty tollol; and,

Should historical novels still be written some five hundred years hence, and some "gifted author" of that day set up for an *original* genius, and kindly re-writes any of Scott's novels, in short, give the then "British public"

"A book, like Pealmanazar's, form'd to last,
That gives th' historic eye a sweet repast;"
as the author of these volumes knows no one more likely to figure as the hero of it than Mr. Dunham Massy, she hopes he will kindly pardon the liberty she has taken in forestalling that event;

"Quæse Fortuna, eodem etiam, faver nominum inclinat."

to speak in despatch style, the highest symptoms of health prevail throughout the troops, who are somnolent to a Morphineiferous degree, without ever being able to get a wink of sleep; hungry as a pack of hounds after a hard day's run, without, upon that account, being able to indulge in any aldermanic replications; and in point of *physique*, provided they carried their knapsacks and charges on their backs to make up the weight, might all ride the 'Flying Dutchman' to-morrow, without any previous training—most healthy *symptoms*, you will own, if they could but be followed up by their ordinary results. Pray thank Dr. Ross for his letter, which I did myself some three weeks ago; and hoping to see the print of your paw soon again, with my salaam to *les beaux yeux*,

"Believe me, my dear fellow,

"Ever faithfully yours,

"BON WILMOT."

"Poor Massy!" said Harcourt, as Dr. Ross returned him the letter. "How provoking that I should never have got Wilmot's first letter of the 22nd, telling me all about the way in which Massy was wounded. What can have become of it?"

"That's another advantage," said the doctor gravely, "of being in this part of the world. Letters seldom reach one *tal* they are converted into relics of antiquity, which, though it may occasion momentary *dasappointments* between the two correspondents, of course enhances the value of the document."

Harcourt now opened the second letter, and found that the cover contained the identical missing letter of the 22nd of June, which had been sent after him from place to place. This letter gave him all the horrible details of that heroic young Dunham Massy's fabulous valour, and terrible mutilation at the taking of the Redan, which now nobody ignores, except the Government, apparently. And this letter was, as a natural pendent to the harrowing account of this noble young hero's sufferings, filled with the most enthusiastic encomiums on the tender care and sleepless devotion of the lady-nurses at Scutari to all the other sufferers. After which the writer added:—"And yet, to read the English papers, one would think that *no* other lady besides Miss Nightingale had, like Lord Bateman, 'put herself all aboard of a ship' *this* 'foreign country for to see,' and that *she alone*—as Mrs. Primrose insisted upon carving all the meat for all the company at the double wedding-feast of her daughters—had insisted upon dressing all the wounds in all the wards; instead of which, never were the beneficial effects of the division of labour more triumphantly exemplified than in the manifold division of this labour of love. And yet not one word is ever said, nay, scarcely an allusion is even made to these, her brave corps of volunteers, or to those admirable Sisters of Charity, who may indeed be called angels, if the term means a messenger from Heaven. Now, *why* is it that none of these should be ever mentioned? How funny despatches would read if (let the victories

or the sacrifices have been ever so glorious) no one individual, who had distinguished themselves in either, was ever mentioned but ONLY the Commander-in-Chief.

"I'll tell you the reason of it," interrupted the Doctor; "it is because in England we recognize but two *principles*, and but two representative classes of those *principles*, which are, idols and victims: the first being the *cause*, the second the *natural* effect of that *cause*. But the idol-trade (not only at Birmingham, but all the world over) is the very best trade going, and the most profitable investment one can make of one's self, and one's vanity, for *this* reason: that though nothing is so difficult to make as a reputation of *any sort*, yet nothing is so easy to keep up, when made; for quackery is like conjuring—we are all perfectly aware that it is a delusion—nay, for that matter, we may be shown the way of it—nevertheless, it is not every one that is quick enough to be able to *do* the tricks himself, when he comes to try; and so, though we affect to laugh contemptuously at the charlatan's tin goblets, and hollow balls, still, we admire his dexterity—and in so doing, swell the tide on which he floats—*literally* floats, for *straws* always swim on the surface; it is only pearls that lie at the bottom; and as there are a million spectators for *one* diver, all the world can see the straw, and that's all the straw wants. But the hydra-curse of England, is Cotton, Cant, and Cliques; and their continued influences have produced utilitarianism, which is a sort of social River Tinto. Now the River Tinto, which rises in Sierra Morena, and empties itself into the Mediterranean, near Huelva, had the name of Tinto given it from the tinge of its waters, which are as yellow as a topaz, hardening the sand, and petrifying it in the most surprising manner; and if a stone happens to fall in, and rest upon another, they both become in a year's time perfectly united and conglutinated, as men do in cliques. The waters of the Tinto, moreover, wither all verdure from its banks, and no fish can live within them; and the like petrifying and withering powers on all the freshness of feeling and luxuriance of the human plant, has your utilitarianism. And great and irreparable injury has it done our age, but more especially our country, in rolling its withering tide to quench those high and noble aspirations which are the offspring of enthusiasm, and which not only contribute to the perfectionizing of the fine arts, but to most other results, which are either just or elevated in action or industry. To endeavour to filter this spirit, therefore, out of the human constitution, and reduce everything to its precise philosophical standard, is to check some of the main springs of real—that is, of *moral*—progression, and to fix half the world, as it has done the English world, in an egotistical apathy; and I think I may safely say, that utilitarianism will never produce, either great or good men, though it may continue to produce, as it has already done, *plenty* of long-headed, shallow-hearted, unprincipled profligates in private life, and un-

scrupulous Judases in public. One thing, at all events, is certain, that utilitarianism will never produce either a race of Dunham Massys or Harcourt Penrhyns, and that reminds me that I must be off to my bullets. But for a last shot at those old granite blocks, the utilitarians; I am now on the shady side of fifty, and can with truth say, that if enthusiasm did not add a fictitious value to the objects of our pursuit, and if imagination did not lend them their brightest colouring, they would for the most part wear an appearance too contemptible to excite a wish."

"After all, it appears to me," said Harcourt, mournfully, "that the greatest foes to enthusiasm are the shortness of life, and the mutability of all human events." And the words were accompanied by a melancholy smile.

"God bless my soul! were you seventy-two or seventy-five your last birth-day?—for an hour less could not have produced such a *Solomonality*," said the doctor, keeping his mouth open to give due effect to his pretended surprise.

"Neither," rejoined Harcourt, with another smile, little less pale than the last; "but I really do think that sickness is a sort of premature old age; it teaches us diffidence in our earthly state, and inspires us with thoughts of a future one, better than a thousand volumes of divinity and philosophy; it gives so warning a concussion to those props of our vanity, our strength and our youth, that we think of fortifying ourselves within, when we find there is so little dependence to be placed upon our out-works."

"No; now really I'm much obliged to you; but just wait till I'm gone, as I cannot stand any more fortifications or out-works, considering the *rather* too much of those luxuries we have had for the last six months." And the next instant the door had closed upon the merry little doctor, and once more poor Harcourt was alone with his bane and antidote!

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE AWKWARD SILENCE. "L'AMORE DOMINATORE."

HARCOURT, WITHOUT THREATENING, WRITES TO HIS MOTHER. DESCRIPTION OF ANTIQUITIES; AND, CONFESSION OF THE OLDEST OF ALL ANTIQUES.

"True love," says St. Evremond, "resembles ghosts and apparitions, because everybody is talking about it, and nobody has ever seen it. Had St. Evremond (*qui n'était rien moins que saint*) lived in these our days, he might have converted this apophthegm into a syllogism, by adding, as the consequence of his major and minor, that, like ghosts also, nobody believes in it either; and yet, like many other things seldom seen, and on that account not credited,

it exists for all that; and its being exceptional, only renders it the more intense where it *does* exist.

When Dr. Ross had closed the door after him, a profound silence was the result. Now silence at all times when it intervenes in a *tête-à-tête* is the very antipodes of china, inasmuch as that it is extremely difficult to break; but this is peculiarly the case when two hearts are volubly and eloquently in unison, and yet there are paralyzing influences, which tie the tongue, and prevent its being their interpreter. Even Florinda, who, amid the safety of numbers, and under the ægis of cousin-ship, was sufficiently fluent and disembarassed, no sooner found herself alone with her one thought, incarnate, than a more than maiden timidity seemed to take possession of her, and the Medusa-head of her great shield turned treacherously inward on herself, but not before it had effectually petrified her companion. As she sat *she* could see the blue white-crested waves, and the dolphins rolling over them, as if trying to catch the golden spangles that the departing sun was showering down upon them as a farewell *largesse*; whereas, from where he was lying, *he* could see nothing but her blue eyes glancing from out the fair heaven of her face. But, as on the one hand, it was not possible that she could go on watching the waves and counting the dolphins for ever, so on the other, it was equally impossible that *he* could continue making the most minute and heraldic researches into the split eagle gorged with a ducal coronet, on the signet-ring that young Mussy had intrusted to his care on the morning of the Redan, and look into that fair face *never*! Things were becoming very awful; for it was impossible that a royal dinner could have been more solemn or more silent; but a crisis was at hand, and when such is the case, whether in love, law, or literature, marriage, money, or madness, *something must* be done; but, whether or no, the change will be for the better, time and the event alone can tell. As women are said to jump to conclusions, one thing, at all events, is very certain, that in all dilemmas, whether in the more serious difficulties of life, or the minor *contretemps* of social intercourse, they are the first to hit upon an expedient for jumping out of them.

"Oh! the beautiful shadows of those dolphins' backs, as the sun comes plunging down into the sea!" exclaimed Florinda. "And that reminds me for you, who are fond of poetry, I have two such gems! Shall I read them to you?"

"I shall be so much obliged to you if you will," said Harcourt, now timidly raising his eyes, for the first time since Dr. Ross's departure, to that perilous face; but even that slight glance seemed to have the effect of what the doctor would have called "an irritant," for he pressed his hand upon his wound, or at least upon his heart, which was in the vicinity of it, and closed his eyes for a moment, as a shudder shook his whole frame.

"There, now!" cried Florinda, "you have hurt yourself in

moving; if you do not keep perfectly still, I will not read to you."

"No, no!—it was nothing—only a spasm; it is over now, and I long to hear what you have to read to me."

"The first must be the 'SHADOWS,'*" said she, taking two Magazines off the table, "as the most appropriate, though I think the other the finest thing I have yet seen in modern poetry;" and she read first the following charming lines from *Fraser's Magazine*, in her low, clear, sweet voice, which made to the harmonious lines a most musical accompaniment:—

"SHADOWS.

"Oh the shadows—the beautiful shadows,
Floating far o'er the hills away;

As over the sky
The light clouds fly,

So o'er the mountains wander they.

"Oh the shadows—the beautiful shadows,
Sleeping soft on the meadows green;

Fair are the flowers

In sun-bright bowers,

But fairer the flowers those shades between!

"Oh the shadows—the beautiful shadows,
Dancing light on the ocean spray;

Changing each wave

From gay to grave,

Like the frowning smiles of a child at play.

"Oh the shadows—the beautiful shadows,
Sinking deep in the moonlit lake:

Where the mountains seem

As if viewed in a dream,

And a world of purer beauty make.

"Oh the shadows—the beautiful shadows,
In the world without and the world within;

For joy may borrow

A charm from sorrow;

And charity smiles on repentant sin.

"Oh the shadows—the beautiful shadows,
Falling soft on the dazzled vision;

When the tender thought,

By memory brought,

Tempers the glare of hopes elysian.

"And there are shadows—merciful shadows,
Dropping like balm on the bleeding heart;

When first it knows

That Love's flame glows

Stronger and purer when joys depart.

* Luckily, everything now-a-days seems to be admissible in literature, from re-writing other people's books to writing the puffs on one's own; otherwise the introduction of this and the following gem here, would certainly be an unpardonable anachronism, as "Shadows" only appeared in the April number of *Fraser*, 1856, and "The Burial of Moses" in *The Dublin University Magazine* for ibid.

"Then bless the shadows—the beautiful shadows;
And take this thought as you gaze abroad;
That in heaven and earth
Shades owe their birth
To LIGHT—AND LIGHT IS THE SHADOW OF GOD.*
N. N. S."

"Beautiful indeed!" sighed Harcourt, as he repeated the last stanza after her; and, looking full in her face, round which a golden halo now played from the refracted rays of the gorgeous sun, he echoed—

"—— AND LIGHT IS THE SHADOW OF GOD!"

"Is it too much," said he, as her eyes were still fixed on the book, and she was silently reading over again these beautiful lines; "Is it too much to ask you to sing me something?"

"Nothing is too much when young gentlemen ask so humbly and prettily for it, as the nursemaids say to the children," smiled she; "but while the daylight lasts I *must* read you my other gem of gems, and if you do not agree with me that it is the finest thing of the kind in modern poetry, why we shall have a serious quarrel, that's all." And, opening the *Dublin University Magazine*, she read out—

"THE BURIAL OF MOSES.

"And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."—Deut. xxiv. 6.

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
And no man dug that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er;
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

"That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling
Or saw the train go forth.
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes when the night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun;

"Noiselessly as the spring-time
Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their thousand leaves;
So, without sound of music,
Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
The great procession swept.

* *Lux umbra Dei*—an old Platonic notion.

“ Perchance the bald old eagle,
 On grey Beth-peor's height,
 Out of his rocky eyrie
 Look'd on the wondrous sight.
 Perchance the lion stalking
 Still shuns that hallow'd spot :
 For beast and bird have seen and heard
 That which man knoweth not.

“ But when the warrior dieth,
 His comrades in the war,
 With arms reversed and muffled drum,
 Follow the funeral car.
 They show the banners taken,
 They tell his battles won,
 And after him lead his matchless steed,
 While peals the minute-gun.

“ Amid the noblest of the land
 Men lay the sage to rest,
 And give the bard an honored place
 With costly marble drest ;
 In the great minster transept,
 Where lights like glories fall,
 And the sweet choir sings, and the organ rings
 Along th' emblazoned wall.

“ This was the bravest warrior
 That ever buckled sword ;
 This the most gifted Poet
 That ever breath'd a word ;
 And never earth's philosopher
 Traced with his golden pen
 On the deathless page truths half so sage
 As he wrote down for men.

“ And had he not high honor ?
 The hill-side for his pall,
 To lie in state while angels wait
 With stars for tapers tall ;
 And the dark rock pines like tossing plumes
 Over his bier to wave,
 And God's own hand in that lonely land
 To lay him in the grave.

“ In that deep grave without a name,
 Whence his uncoffin'd clay
 Shall break again, most wondrous thought !
 Before the Judgment Day ;
 And stand with glory wrapped around
 On the hills he never trod,
 And speak of the strife that won our life
 With th' Incarnate SON of God.

“ O lonely tomb in Meab's land,
 O dark Beth-peor's hill,
 Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
 And teach them to be still.
 God hath his mysteries of grace,
 Ways that we cannot tell ;
 He hides them deep like the secret sleep
 Of him He loved so well.”

"That is indeed fine! No, we shall not quarrel, Florida;" and it was well the day was waning, for it was the first time he had ever called her by her name, and his voice trembled at his own temerity, that, to quote two of the exquisite lines he had just been hearing, the tumultuous blood came eddying up from his heart, as when—

"— The crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun."

Yet the pallor that had been so suddenly expelled from his wan face seemed to have fled to hers for refuge, for having heard her own name so tremulously pronounced she trembled too. Was she afraid the winds and waves would hear it also? and proclaim it throughout what Camoens calls

"A grande Inglaterra che de neve
Boreal sempre abunda,"

where, at all events, through the conventional hearts (?) of what we call "society," the snows of apathy seldom or never melt, and the north wind of prejudice seldom ceases to blow. It might be to hush with many sounds that tell-tale name, or to mystify the listening winds and waves, that she so hastily took up the guitar, greatly to Pattapouffe's annoyance, who had pillowed his little, snowy, fluffy, head on the ribbon attached to it; and as she precluded one of those touching minors of a Brazilian *modinha* upon it—

"What a pity it is," said Harcourt, "that there is no one who has sense enough and soul enough to marry suitable English words to those exquisite Spanish and Portuguese airs; for, as in Italian songs, the words are so seldom worthy of the music, so with us it is generally the reverse, the music seldom does justice to the words."

"I was so completely of your opinion," said she, "that from this *modinha* I am now playing, I uprooted all the hearts and darts, eyes and skies, flowers and bowers, and adapted those words of Shelley's to it, which sounds to me more like the truth of the music."

"Do let me hear the ones you mean."

"I ARISE FROM DREAMS OF THEE."

"I arise from dreams of thee,
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright."

"I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Has led me, who knows how,
Beneath thy window, sweet!"

* Which has now been set by Charles Salaman.

Like all the airs of that class, the last strains of it were a sort of dying away in their own sweetness, as if the theory of twin souls was being realized, and after a long, weary, separate earthly pilgrimage, they had at length met in the realms of bliss; and expanding their wings to each other, had, in one long first and last embrace, commingled their existence, never again to be disunited. And these strains so exquisite in themselves, lost none of their emphatic intonation from Florinda's rich contralto voice. And as the now risen moonbeams danced upon the waters, one might have almost fancied it was to the vibration of those entrancing harmonies which were then sending their last echoes over them. A murmur escaped from Harcourt mechanically; for a moment he held out his arms, as if they had been moved by the sudden touching of a spring.

"You are ill; you want something?" said Florinda, hastily laying down the guitar, and approaching the sofa; "what is it?"

"Nothing," said he, raising himself on his elbow, as he seized both her hands and covered them with kisses so vehement, so burning, that they terrified her. "Nothing, but to die; for I love you, Florinda. Oh! but I love you, till my very *soul* aches again with rapture and with torture, one of which alone would be insupportable,—there,—there,—only let me lay my head for one moment on your shoulder,—only let me hear and feel the beating of your heart *once*, and I don't care how soon mine ceases to beat; and surely death would expiate even a greater crime than my love for you."

"And is it then such a crime to love—me?—I mean," said she, as she still leant her cheek against his, and never attempted to remove it—"to love your poor little cousin Flo?"

"Yes, in me, perhaps it is; for I cannot love you as a cousin."

"And yet you said just now you loved me."

"Love you, yes, as a thing to worship!—as an angel!—A ministering angel have you not been to me!—an angel of light and life in the midst of danger and of death. Ah! I would call thee somewhat higher still; but when my thoughts search Heaven for appellations, they echo back the sovereign name of Woman! Thou woman, therefore, oh! thou loveliest woman; hear me as you would hear the unburthening of a soul that hovered on the brink of eternity, and only hoped to be shrived as it had no concealments. Don't interrupt me," continued he, upon her attempting to speak; "the torrent is dashing down from the mountain to night,—it may again be frozen up to-morrow; you have touched the rock—let the living waters then for once gush from my heart into yours. You know when your brother first so kindly sought me out; how long I was before I availed myself of his invitation. But what you do not know, and perhaps will not believe—for I can scarcely believe it myself now—is, that before I saw you, I almost hated you for your name's sake. Now the mere recollection of such a sacrifice

seems impossible. I had heard much of your beauty, (who has not?) but had resolved it should not be beauty to me; yet when I saw you I was bewildered, spell-bound, entranced;—

“Ten thousand graces played about your face,
Ten thousand loves attended every grace.”

Still, I was then only in love with you, as it is called, for I only saw those exterior perfections which I must have been more or less than human to have resisted, and—like a shallow fool that I was, and you flattered my vanity, Florinda, (which of man's love, some say, ever is a part) by the untiring interest with which you recurred to that affair at Balaklava, and the way that beautiful face of yours grew pale at the idea of what my fate might have been, had that fusee exploded; till, to burst this hollow bubble, vanity, I recollected all women were Desdemonas, who loved men, more or less, ‘for the dangers they had passed.’ And then, and then, I began to reason with myself and think, even had you no proud, and I no poor, mother in the way, how many thousand more dangers must be passed before a poor lieutenant could ‘pluck,’ either ‘from the cannon's mouth,’ or his country's service, a rank sufficient to lay at your feet. On this, I grew most wise, most wretched; for I kept away from you, without being able to banish your recollection, till that ball at Stamboul that I was obliged to go to, (and I fear I should have gone too had I not been obliged,) razed the wall of adamant that prudence and stoicism had been building up. That night, it was, in reproaching me for my long absence, that you first called me ‘Cousin Harcourt.’ Oh, Florinda! I still feel the balm of your gentle breath upon my cheek as you uttered those dear, yet cruel words; and as they thrilled down into my heart, my very soul seemed stirred, and suddenly flooded with light, as I have so often of late in these latitudes watched the dawn come stealthily, yet fleetly, upon the night's darkness, and steep all its clouds in day. And despise me, if you will, for my presumption; but then it was, I for the first time also thought that I was not quite indifferent to you; yet still, instead of presuming farther upon this daring surmise, I resolved anew to gird on all my resolution, and to discontinue an intercourse which I felt I could not pursue without being dishonorable to you, and inhuman to myself; and therefore, as you know, I quitted you that night, or rather morning, with more love struggling in my heart than mortal lips had ever uttered without one syllable of it passing mine. Nay, more; I had heroically resolved never to see that bewildering face of yours again, having had the virtue to refrain from asking you for your heart. Would you have given it me if I had, Florinda?”

“No,” whispered she, “because you had taken it without the ceremony of asking.”

At this, he folded her so closely to his heart that it was only surprising he had not driven her into it quite as far as the place

from whence poor Dr. Ross had taken such pains to extract the bullet.

"But," resumed he, "not having done so, I thought I might reward such self-denial by stealing one of your gloves; and that little talisman I wore day and night next my heart; but it was a bad way of trying to forget you. And often as I have sat by our bivouac-fire at night, I have thought I would take courage and cast it from me as we are told to pluck out an eye or ear that offends: but when I came to try, I found the bare idea was but a coward's boast, which fails at the first test it's put to. And so I continued to hug my destruction only the closer, for truly, as some old poet says—

'Ambrosia mixed with aconite may have
A pleasant taste, but sends you to the grave.'

But only in its own way, for, as you shall hear presently, that little glove saved my life."

"Saved your life!"

"Even so. The morning of the attack on the Redan, for a moment I was almost tempted to consign it to the care of a friend, to whom I had entrusted a ring to send to my mother in case I fell ill; but up rushed a crowd of motives to prevent my doing this—the first, a most selfish one, for I thought if I were like so many more before the sun had set, laid in some

—'deep grave without a name,'

that *one* relic of *you* should hallow it. Neither could I bear the idea of its being touched by any other hand before it could be restored to yours; and again I said, Why betray in death a love I never betrayed in life, and which may only serve as a fetter and a regret to her when she is back in her splendid home, and would perhaps gladly forget the short episode of her poor soldier-cousin?"

Here he was interrupted by Florinda's sobs, and felt his cheeks bathed with her tears; "Oh!" said he, as he kissed them away, "thank God I did *not* die *then*, or I should never have known such a moment as this. Florinda! my Florinda!—*now* if never more, tell me; oh, tell it me again and again, though you unsay it all to-morrow, and though I, and reason, and duty, and all the other tortures that go to the breaking of hearts upon Fate's rack, urge you to do so; tell me *now*, that, as that beautiful poem you read to me, says, you do not wish Time to

'Speak to those busy hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still!'"

"No;" murmured she,—"I only wish Time to stand still at this moment; for from all his sands never will he shake out another so happy to me as this one."

"And yet," said Harcourt, "within this last month, what an

ungrateful ice-bound wretch you *must* have thought me. When I was only in love with you, to conceal it was difficult enough; but oh! Florinda, when I came to love you, with every possible love! (for you have been to me a whole scale of affections, graduating from the distant,—and ultimately harmonizing into the full tone of the nearest and dearest of all;) how, then, could I *thank* you, as cousin, sister, nurse, and friend?—when I loved you, as what you may never be (to me) a wife! Forgive me, then, the selfishness, the madness, which has made me not only tear the mask from my own heart, but raise the veil from yours. Oh! do not, at all events, think I have done so recklessly and wantonly. God knows *how* I have struggled against this fatal weakness, night and day, hourly and momentarily; but there is no contending against one's fate, and the mortal who has the temerity to attempt it is soon punished by being made to succumb to it."

"Harcourt," said Florinda, raising her head from his shoulder, and trying to infuse a slight tone of resentment into her voice, which, was, however, quite stifled by her tears, "it is scarcely generous of you, whom I thought so generous, to make me confess that I love you, and then put me to the humiliating alternative of asking *why* I cannot be your wife, by telling me I never can be so. You say you are only a lieutenant. What of that? every Field Marshal has begun by being such, and has arrived at the highest grade of his profession *without* even stopping shells in their headlong career as you have done. You talk of our being poor. We are *not* rich certainly; but one *may* live on the interest of £20,000; then at one-and-twenty I shall be my own mistress, and I really do not think that any code of duty can call upon me to sacrifice the happiness of my whole life to my mother's pride."

"Florinda, hear me!" interrupted he, and, in spite of all her efforts to prevent him, kneeling before her and taking both her hands in his; "*don't* use the word 'humiliating' in reference to anything you have said or may say to me; for were it possible that I could either adore or esteem, nay, venerate, you more than I already do, it would be for that noble purity of nature which, clothed in the spotless vesture of modesty and innocence, disdains the flimsy drapery of affectation. You have given me your heart, Florinda; then have I not a *right* to its treasures, that is, to its every thought? I can quite understand that *you* may feel that you do not owe the sacrifice of your happiness to your mother's low pride (forgive me the expression); but with me the case is different. No tax of duty, exacted by a selfish, tyrannical, ambitious father, or by a vain, worldly mother, could ever, I own it, extort from me the amount of self-abnegation and sacrifice which, as a free-will offering of love, I owe, and will to the uttermost pay, to my mother (who has in all things so sacrificed herself for me). All that my father *should* have been to her, but was not, I ought to be, and will. He entailed upon her the desertion of her own

family, and the insulting contumely and neglect of his; he threw her ruthlessly into the world's wide arena to contend, unarmed and alone, against its fearful odds. Let me at least, late as it is, stand between her and them. Perhaps, in all creation, the *only* family she would object to my marrying into is yours; and even now, I know her so well, that seeing how I have given my heart, my life, nay, my very soul, into your keeping, her objection might never be expressed in words—an additional reason why I should respect her feelings, even at the sacrifice of my own; oh! more, Florinda, even at the sacrifice of yours."

He paused for a moment, as he hid his face in her lap, and burst into tears.

"Harcourt! dear Harcourt! *Cousin Harcourt*—for fate itself cannot prevent *that* relationship—now hear me. Never will I urge you to be unworthy of your mother, unworthy of yourself! for it is *you*, the generous, the noble, the brave, the *honest*, the high-minded Harcourt that I love; and I would rather a thousand times that my heart should break in regretting you than that it should have even the faintest shadow less reason to love you. Remain then on your own high pedestal, and don't think I will ever try to drag you down from it; no, I am more ambitious than that comes to; my aim shall be to try and climb to the same height; that I may at least *seem* on a par with you, though I never can be so in reality, as you took the initiative. But do return to the sofa and let me settle your pillows, for I have something to say, that I can only whisper to you;" and with a gentle force she raised him up; when, exhausted both by mental excitement and physical exertion, he fell back on his pillow almost in a fainting state; but Florinda lit the lamp, and, bathing his temples with some eau de Cologne and water he soon revived.

"And now," resumed she, seating herself on a low stool beside the couch, and again leaning her cheek against his, "listen to what I am going to say?" But instead of doing so, he so effectually stopped her mouth with kisses, that it was some seconds before she could whisper in his ear—

"I was thinking, Harcourt, that the only time I saw your mother she seemed so good, so kind, so *like* a mother, and so unlike a mother-in-law, that *perhaps* when she came to know your poor little Florinda she might pity her, and you know that pity is——"

"Akin to love, but how near akin has never yet been determined," put in Harcourt, punctuating the doubt with another kiss.

"Oh! so near," smiled Florinda, "that I think it must be the *Cousin Harcourt* of love," at which she was again interrupted by the same hermetical seal.

"Now it is very rude of you to interrupt me in this way, for I shall never finish what I was going to say—which was, that if your mother, after all, was to end by pitying me, and, as a natural con-

sequence, loving me, and that she saw how humble poor *little me* was, and that I should not mind even being her servant in the *meanest* of little cottages, or the Little Peddlingtonest of country towns, perhaps—mind I say *perhaps*—though I have the misfortune to be her cousin, she might not mind my becoming her daughter.”

“And do you think, my own darling, that I could ever be such a wretch as to consent to your being in such a position as you describe? Do you think, in short, that I would ever be accessory to placing you between those Dardanelles of English society—neglect on the one side and impertinence on the other? You little know, my own love, what it is to be *patronized* by a set of vulgar people, who, had you remained in your sphere, could never have discovered meannesses sufficiently abject to bow down to you with. But monetary supremacy being the only one acknowledged in our utilitarian country, poor birth has ever but a sorry berth of it, even with those who profess to feel for the hardships it may be subjected to; for English pity is more generally evinced by the well-bred apathy of a silent standing aloof, than by the vulgar demonstrativeness of kindly acts; and how often have I heard my poor mother say, and indeed, if she had not said it, I should have seen her *suffering* it, ‘that no one could form any idea of the concrete tortures of a false position but those who have been condemned to it.’”

“Ah!” interrupted Florinda; “you are talking of the outward geographical world, which is no more to me than the wall of China. You are my world, and, unless you set about torturing me, I defy any one, or any thing else to have the power of doing so. Therefore, that said world might do its best or its worst; contempt is all it could extort from me.”

“Ah! you think so now, my little Flo,” said he, kissing the hand he held within his own; “and I have no doubt if the poor caged animals at the Zoological Gardens could speak and tell us so, that they also heartily despise the silly and ill-natured people who goad and poke them about through their prison bars with sticks and parasols. Nevertheless, depend upon it, it worries them, and makes them feel sore enough when the day is over; besides, in this, the world has always the advantage, that our contempt ever falls short of the mark; whereas, the slightest shaft of persecution or malevolence is sure to strike home.”

“Not if one won’t be a target; and as for the other pakings, why I’d retreat to the very innermost recesses of my den beyond their reach. No, the only barrier that daunts me is your mother. But she is your mother, Harcourt; so I won’t despair, but trust to God’s goodness, which, like His power, is infinite; and what wonders does not His servant Time sometimes achieve!”

Harcourt’s only reply to this was a sigh; and as he again pressed her hand to his lips, his tears once more fell hot and fast upon it.

"Nay now," said she, with a bright smile, "there is no use in your sowing my hand with kisses if you wash them away the very next moment with tears. Besides, remember

'His tears are born of unbelief who sorrows without hope.'

Now I, since you have told me that you love me, am a true believer, and therefore *hope* all things, and can endure all things."

"Angel! if ever there was one," exclaimed he, straining her to his heart, "oh! that I could either love you less, or that life were long enough to *prove* to you the excess of that love—that *one great reality* in this vanishing phantom that we call Life, which is indeed—

'Like to a ship that leaves no trace,
Or bird that seeks her resting-place,
Or arrow in its rockless flight,
Or guest that tarries but a night.
E'en so is life, and man may see
In *fleetest* things its brevity;
The ship is past—the bird is flown—
The arrow sped—the guest is gone.'

"Well, Sir, that is no doubt because *you* did not use him well," said she, gently slapping his cheek; "but I have *two* guests, Love and Hope, who find themselves so perfectly at home, that they *won't* go. But by the bye, as life is so short, that reminds me to ask you how my good little glove came to save *your* life. I really should like to see it and thank it for having rendered me such a service; and I'm not sure that I shall not get De Baskerville to ask it to dinner, which you know is the Anglo-Saxon *ne plus ultra* demonstration of gratitude."

"You *shall* see it, love, one of these days."

"Ah! traitor, I have caught you then, for it appears that you no longer wear it night and day *now*."

"No; I plead guilty to that fact, for the truth is, it has more of me than you about it now."

"Another heresy! if we twain are what we ought to be, one; but as no prisoner at the bar is required, or even allowed to say what may criminate himself, go on with the history of this new life-preserver, which we are now graciously pleased to hear."

And Harcourt close to her ear, and in a low murmuring voice, between a whisper and a kiss, gave her the whole history of the glove, which for some hours he had worn, not next, but literally *in*, his heart, till Dr. Ross had extracted it. "And *that* is what Ross was alluding to awhile ago, with his little, wicked, twinkling eyes, when he talked of writing to *The Times*, recommending the Ordinance, for the future, to have bullets covered with kid."

"Oh, the wretch! and I innocently listening to him as if he had made the most wonderful discovery in the world, which, indeed, he

had, at my expense. I have a great mind to put Cayenne pepper in his tea to-night, as another branch of science for him to explore."

"Better not meddle with edged tools, my Flo'; for the little man can be as sharp with his tongue as with his lancet, and it might be dangerous to provoke one who, like him, can, as you perceive, unwind secrets from one's very heart, and bring them to light," laughed Harcourt.

"He may thank his stars that I owe him a debt of eternal gratitude for having brought that horrid ball to light too, or else Dr. Ross might ——"

"What might Dr. Ross do, or may he have the pleasure of doing for your ladyship?" said the little doctor, giving a cursory glance towards his patient's pillow as he entered, which Florinda suddenly perceived the necessity of arranging, as she hastily rose up and found herself standing so very close to them.

"Why," said she, "he may ring for tea if he will have the goodness to do so."

"The *vary* thing I came to enquire about; for I was sadly afraid your ladyship was doing the Oriental, and substituting pipes and sherbet for it; not but what the weed is weel enough in its way, though I prefer the shrub to it;" and so saying he rang the bell as he passed, and then walked to the sofa and felt his patient's pulse.

"Humph! its *vary* odd; but though your face is more flushed than I approve of, and your pulse are quicker than they ought to be, I find less of the hospital about you than I did this morning. It is wonderful the effect that agreeable conversation has, even upon gun-shot wounds. If you have any intention, Lady Florinda, of going to America and turning physician, I'll be *vary* hoppy to *geeve* you my vote and interest towards destroying your dimples and insuring your diploma."

"Thank you, doctor; and as one good turn deserves another, when I *do go* I shall be equally happy to try and persuade the Yankees to leave off the long-bow and patronize your improved ammunition."

"Eh, weel hit! if I could *remamber* the lines about the eagle being shot with an arrow, barbed with one of its *ain* feathers——"

"In which the eagle had the advantage, as I have only hit you with some of your own lead."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the merry little doctor, "your ladyship may find the wit; but as I'm all for an equalisation of property, *racollect* that the laugh is at my expense. Weel, *naver* mind, *on se retire pour mieux sauter*; and though I may beat a retreat to-night, I'll bide my time."

And, not the least doubting that he would, no sooner were the tea-things removed than she arranged the chess-board, thinking that would be the most effectual means of silencing him.

Florinda was supremely happy that evening; and as happiness,

unlike the meteor joy, is a deep, quiet, silent thing, that quiet, silent game suited her admirably. Harcourt also felt as if the dense chaos, out of which the world had been made, was removed from his heart, and spheres of light began to revolve in its stead; and though the certainty of being loved did not suffice to make him an unclouded heaven of happiness, as it did her, yet he did, it must be confessed—despite all his fears for the future—revel in that preventive feeling common to lovers and to dogs in the manger, that if she could not be his—at all events, loving him—she would be nobody else's; and such a wonderful elixir was this reflection, that the next day he found strength to write a long letter to his mother, which began, naturally, by expatiating upon the extreme and ceaseless care and kindness he had received from his *cousin*, to which care and kindness Dr. Ross had assured him, under Providence, *she was indebted for still having a son*. That he thought a stronger way of putting it than to which under Providence *I owe my life*. And then began the difficulty as to the *pith* and *real* drift of the letter, as men *don't* write postscripts; no, but they can cram the gist of the matter into an inconceivably small space under the seal. But as he was a long way off from that, yet he thought the best plan would be to be geographical before he was graphic touching what had a far deeper interest for him; so, taking an heroic plunge into the Baltic, he went on to say—"In fact, my dearest mother, this little cruise has done me a world of good. As you know, Strabo imagined that the overflowing of the Euxine and the Baltic formed the Propontis; and certainly the two lakes on the north bank of the latter prove that its waters gradually sunk; and its bed will one day be filled up like those of the Euxine and Baltic. We went from Constantinople to Seliyri, Heraclea, Ganos, Myrioplato, Peristasis, and Palio Patino, crossing the Strait of the Dardanelles. Mount Olympus, they tell me (as I could not go on shore) has still at its foot, a well-watered plain; but of what I can assure you from my *own* personal experience is, that the mulberries from that said plain, in which Tamerlane and Bajazet had their set-to, are still super-excellent. I confess I was grieved not to be able to ascend woody Olympus, and from its summit catch that magnificent view (as every one says it is) of Constantinople. I was sorry, too, not to see that triangular pyramid, the tomb of Catus Filiscus, the son of the *Ross* of that day; I mean of the physician, Asclepiades. As for the pretended pillar of Pompey, it is nothing more than an altar erected in honour of Augustus, as this inscription on it proves—

‘CÆSARI AVGVSTO

E. C. L. ANNIDIVS

L. F. C L A

FRONTO.

But, Mother, that for once an epitaph may *not* lie, but tell the

truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, if you want an inscription for my urn, let it be, 'Herein are the ashes of one who loved Florinda Andover better than his life, but who loved his exemplary mother better than either, and so sacrificed both, rather than give her one moment's uneasiness.' And now, Mother mine, good bye, and God ever bless you. You now know *all*, and never shall know less than the exact truth from your

"Grateful and affectionate son.

"HARCOURT PENRHYN."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SICK CHILD. THE FADING FLOWER.

THE broad lands around Baron's Court were looking their loveliest, under the rich glow of a September sun, but the shutters of two of the upper windows of the house were closed in two different gables, and silence reigned throughout it—that cold, rigid silence, which waits on death rather than on quiet and repose; and truly sorrow *was* there dreading, because expecting, the arrival of death. Poor little Charley had the scarlet fever, and though Mrs. Lewyn (the old lady who had been at Mr. Lethbridge's meeting) had kindly offered to take May and Linda, nothing could induce them to leave their little brother. The other invalid was Miss Kempenfelt, who had taken to her bed from sheer fright, and was enacting her favourite rôle of the *Malade Imaginaire*; and, like all such, was giving more trouble than a whole hospital of wounded soldiers. Mrs. Penrhyn did her uttermost, not only to keep the two sisters as much as possible out of the poor little sufferer's room, but, when they were not in the fresh air, to keep them employed in ministering to Miss Charity's ever-growing and ever-varying wants, upon a sort of principle of counter-irritation; and the plan succeeded admirably, as it diverted at least Linda's violent grief for her brother's illness to frequent and violent indignation against her aunt's unreasonableness. Twice a day only Mrs. Penrhyn allowed the girls to see their brother, and then she made them wear respirators, and slip over their dress a loose wrapper that was well sprinkled with chloride of lime. As she was going up the back-stairs to the school room, to take May and Linda to Charley, she found Linda crying violently on the landing.

"What is the matter, dear?" said she, drawing her kindly towards her.

"Aunt Charity," sobbed she, "has been scolding me because

the guard was not on her fire, and a great coal fell out into the fender and disturbed her, as if I could help *that*."

"Well, but had she told you to have the guard put on?"

"Why, yes she did, and I *told* Anne to put it on."

"You should have put it on yourself, Linda, or seen that Anne did so. It is a very great fault in any one, but more especially in children and servants, not to do *exactly* what they are told, and do it *when* they are told; it is this transferring orders from one to another, telling John to tell Tom to tell Harry to tell James, that causes all the neglect, mismanagement, and confusion in the world. The Spaniards have a true proverb:—'If you want a thing *go for it*: if you don't, send;' and if you want a thing *to be done*, see that it is *done*, and don't trust to any one else, who may follow your example and roll on the order still farther till it is no where to be found, like a shuttlecock sent over the wall."

"Ah! you always take part with Aunt Charity," re-sobbed Linda.

"Only for your sake; for believe me, my dear child, you cannot too soon give yourself the *habit* of executing *scrupulously* and *conscientiously* whatever you undertake to do for others, for though a thing may appear the most puerile trifle to you, it may be of the most *vital importance* to them. For instance, suppose your Aunt Charity's life had depended upon her getting a quiet and uninterrupted sleep after an opiate?"

"Well, if it had," broke in Linda, "it would not have been my fault that a coal had fallen out of the fire and made a noise. I could not help *that*."

"I think you might, if, instead of letting your own temper be chafed at the peevishness and irritation which is almost inseparable from illness, you would rather compassionate the invalid for this irritability, which is not one of the least of their sufferings, and study how you could obviate giving them any cause for it."

"Surely, Mrs. Pemble, if I studied till doomsday I could not prevent cinders falling into the grate and making a noise."

"I think you might even do *that* with a little invention; but *rien sans peine*, you know. Now if the next time you go into your aunt's room, you will take a piece of tape and measure first the size of the grate within the fender, and then the breadth and depth of the opening that goes under the grate, we will get a tin made to fit over the whole—that is, to slide in, under the grate; and by having this tin filled, or rather half filled, every morning with damp sawdust or sand, the cinders falling, will, or can, make no noise; and, moreover, the noise so worrying to an invalid, of having the grate cleaned, and the cinders raked up every morning, will be also avoided; as they can all be carried away, ready collected in this tin, which when they are thrown out, is replenished with fresh wet sand or sawdust, and put back again."

"I do believe," said Linda, throwing her arms round Mrs. Pen-

rhyn's neck, "that if one wanted one of the stars out of the sky, you would invent something by which one might get it."

"I fear, my little Linda, *that* is rather beyond me; so I must say to you, as Lord Albemarle did to his lady-love, 'Don't wish for a star, for I cannot give it to you.'"

"Talking of stars, do you know, Mr. Lethbridge lent me Humbolt's *Kosmos*; and, though I thought I should find it so dry, I'm so much interested in it."

"So *what*, Linda?"

"I forget, I mean interested; but Miss Prosser used always to say interested with a great stress on the *res*, as if it had two *ss's*."

"No doubt; and Miss Prosser, you tell me, used to say *kw-cumber*; and I mean *to*, or I don't *mean to*; and talk of *expecting* that a thing *had* been; and called going in a carriage *riding*. But Miss Prosser had kept a school in a provincial town where people do speak in that way, as indeed cabmen, maid-servants, and a certain race of authors do in London; but as you are a gentlewoman, Linda, and therefore likely to associate with ladies and gentlemen, you should try and break yourself of those intense vulgarisms, as nothing annoys your grand-papa so much."

"I will, dear; and I am better than *I was*—now am I not?"

"Why, yes; but *best* is beyond better, and that is what I want you to be in all things."

"I don't think any one but you and grand-papa can be that. I'm sure Aunt Charity never will. And what do you think she fancies now? Why, that she has got the quinsy; but I told her it was only the *whimsey*."

"That was very pert of you," laughed Mrs. Pemble. "However, have the goodness to recollect that the *whimsey* is the most troublesome and *exigeante* of all complaints; so *mind* that you attend to it properly."

"May has gone to Charley's room; may I not go too, now?"

"I was just going for you; but May should not have gone by herself. I hope she did not forget the chloride of lime and the respirator."

"I think she did; indeed, I am almost sure she went just as she was."

"Naughty child; one would really think she did it on purpose, and was trying to catch the infection."

"I almost think she is, for latterly she seems so pale, so dull, nothing seems to amuse her; and she never sits with me as she used to do. Indeed, Mrs. Pemble, I don't think May is well."

"I have long feared that she was not; still she persists in saying that there is nothing the matter with her."

Upon softly opening the nursery door they saw Mrs. Andrews, the nurse, standing at one side of poor little Charley's bed, and May kneeling at the other, with her cheek upon the pillow close to

the poor little sufferer's face, who was rolling about his head, from which all the golden curls had been cut, flinging about his arms, and rambling in the wildest manner. Mrs. Penrhyn threw up her hands and shook her head deprecatingly at May, who then rose up slowly, and covered her eyes (which seemed more burning than his) in her handkerchief."

"Poor little dear! Dr. Marsh thinks him better, ma'am," said Mrs. Andrews in a low voice, "though he do run on so;" and here the child repeated the burden of his ravings—

"Some say the owl is a baker's daughter; but that's not true, she's Swiftpaws' daughter, and Fluff's son. And May and Linda took all the kingcups out of the meadow. But I'm to have wings—Mrs. Pemble said I should—to go to the top of Snowdon and see how the sun makes the flowers, and I'm to ride back on grand-papa's charger. And if I'm good I'm to sit at church with all the stars—Mr. Lethbridge said so. Won't that be grand? And Fluff and Swiftpaws are to stay till I come back with Tamar and Taffy Lloyd. And Aunt Charity is to marry Mr. Twitcher, and then the owl will be the baker's daughter. But May and Linda sha'n't give her even a single cowslip, because she would not give the poor old woman any bread; and that's what comes of being a baker's daughter! Owl! owl! don't howl, or your head will swell as big as the bread put it into the oven, when the fairy cheated the baker's daughter."

"Poor little fellow!" said May; "that explanation you gave us some time ago about Ophelia's saying 'the owl's a baker's daughter' is running in his head. Mrs. Andrews thought he had been frightened by an owl, he has gone on so all night about it."

Mrs. Penrhyn removed the linen from his temples, which were now burning hot again, and re-steeped it in iced-water and chloride of lime, and for a moment that seemed to ease him, and he raved less; and as she felt his little, hot, galloping pulse, she said to Mrs. Andrews, 'Have the goodness to go down and ask for a cup-full of fresh yeast, and bring it here with a dessert-spoon. I'll take it upon myself to give it to him, it *can* do no harm, and I have seen it work such miracles in all cases of fever that I will try it.'

Mrs. Andrews soon returned with the yeast, and Mrs. Penrhyn gave the child a dessert-spoonful, after which she took his little burning hand in hers and continued to feel his pulse. Gradually his ravings became fewer and fainter, his eyelids began to droop, and in about ten minutes he had dropped into a profound sleep.

"It is probable," said Mrs. Pemble to the nurse, as she gently laid down the little hand she had been holding, "that he may sleep for some hours; it is also possible, that on waking, he may feel hungry, and ask for something to eat. If so, be sure and give it to him. He may have a bit of chicken and some jelly, or blanc-mange, or anything of that kind that he fancies; only first be sure

and give him another dessert-spoonful of yeast, and another again at bed-time; and if I should not happen to be here when he wakes, have the goodness to send for me."

And so saying she beckoned to the two girls to follow her out of the room, taking care to sprinkle it plentifully with chloride of lime as she went. They had no sooner reached the school-room than Linda flung herself on the sofa, and burst into a passion of tears, sobbing out she was *now* quite sure that Charley would die, for when Nanny Markham's child was ill last year Tamar Lloyd had said whenever a sick child talked either of angels or wings, they would surely die, and Johnny Markham *had died*.

"For shame, Linda! instead of putting your trust in God's mercy; and, even if it should be as you fear, submitting to His will, you go pinning your faith and making yourself wretched on the strength of a parcel of old women's fables. If it *should* be God's will to take your poor little brother, though I hope and trust it will be His great mercy not to do so, you should seek your consolation in the remembrance of the great favour God shews to some privileged souls, in recalling them back to heaven, while they are still, from the fewness of their years, innocent and untainted with any of this world's pollution; and so check your selfish regrets in the recollection that *you* alone suffer—that to him all must be gain, glory, and endless joy. Still, to grieve to a certain extent, is not only allowable, but commendable, as you would be both unnatural and unfeeling if you did not do so. Why, even were your sister to go on a visit, where *she* would be very happy, you would feel lonely and desolate without her, and would of course grieve for the loss of her presence and companionship; but if, notwithstanding *her* great augmentation of happiness and welfare, you would *not* be consoled for her absence, why *then* your sorrow would degenerate into selfishness, and would cease to deserve sympathy. Bring me that book bound in russet off the third shelf, and I will read you an admirable letter on this very subject, written by Benjamin Franklin, on the death of his brother John, addressed to his brother's daughter-in-law." "Ah, here it is!" added Mrs. Penrhyn, turning over the leaves:—

"Dear Child,

"I condole with you. We have lost a most dear and valuable relation! but it is the will of God that these mortal bodies should be laid aside when the soul is to enter into real life; 'tis rather an embryo state, a preparation for living. A man is not completely born till he be dead. Why then should we grieve that a new child be born among the immortals—a new member added to their happy society. We are but spirits. That bodies should be lent us while they can afford us pleasure, assist us in acquiring knowledge, or doing good to our fellow-creatures, is a kind, benevolent act of God. When they become unfit for

these purposes, and afford us pain instead of pleasure, instead of an aid, they become an incumbrance, and answer none of the intentions for which they were given; it is equally kind and benevolent, that a way is provided by which we can get rid of them. Death is that way. We ourselves prudently choose a partial death; in some cases a mangled, painful limb, which cannot be restored, we willingly cut off. He who plucks out a tooth parts with it freely, since the pain goes with it; and he that quits the whole body, parts at once with all its pains, and possibilities of pains and diseases it was liable to, or capable of making him suffer.

“Our friend and we are invited abroad on a party of pleasure that is to last for ever. His carriage was first ready, and he is gone before us. We could not all conveniently start together. And why should you and I be grieved at this, since we are soon to follow, and know where to find him.

“Adieu, B. F.”

“Well, that is a good letter,” said Linda, drying her eyes, and throwing her arms about Mrs. Penrhyn’s neck; “and I will try and mind what you and it say. Is there any more about that good old Dr. Franklin?”

“Yes, here is his epitaph, written by himself when he was a printer; and it is quite in the same true and wise spirit as the letter I have just read you:

“‘The Body
of
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, PRINTER
(Like the cover of an old book,
Its contents torn out
And stript of its lettering and gilding,)
Lies food for worms:
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,
For it will (as he believed) appear once more,
In a new
And more beautiful edition,
Corrected, and amended,
BY
THE AUTHOR.’

And now, like a good, kind, little girl as you are, *quoique tant soit peu étourdie*, go and see how your aunt Charity is; and don’t forget to take the measure of her grate.”

“Oh, yes! and I must see about melting the butter for her boiled fish dinner; for yesterday she was so angry, as she declared they had put flour in it.”

“Well, I don’t wonder at her being angry, for *that is* an abomination; and besides, you know that when she is ill she likes you or May always to melt it for her, in her own little silver sauce-pan; therefore you should take care to do it, and not trust to

servants, who seldom now-a-days will give either the time or the attention to doing even the most trifling things as they ought to be done."

"Ah! but do you know, even with me the butter will sometimes either turn to oil, or is too thin?"

"All your own fault, as it could not possibly do so if you melted it in the way I showed you how to do it; that is, to put a tablespoon—not quite full of cold water—and the moment it begins to heat take it off the fire and turn the saucepan *always one way from you*, and so on, till it is quite melted; and then, but not till then, let it boil up *once*, which makes it as thick as *very* thick cream; but if you turn it either *over* the fire or *towards* you, it will oil it, or if you put more than the tablespoonful of water it will make it thin and watery, and cause the butter and water to separate, and render it so nasty looking as to be uneatable. For my part, I always judge of the mistress of a house, be she rich or poor—a great lady or a very humble one—by the coffee, melted butter, bread, oyster, celery, and lobster sauce, that come to her table, and the way she makes tea. When all these are bad, uneatable, undrinkable, I conclude that she is not fit to be the mistress of a house, and regret that she should be."

When Linda left the room, May sat upon a stool at Mrs. Penrhyn's feet, and laid her head on her lap.

"My dearest love," said the latter, "you really must not be so imprudent as to go into Charley's room without taking any precautions, and still less go hanging over his pillow and breathing that infectious air. Promise me that you will not do so again?"

"What does it matter, dear? I feel sure Charley will recover, and be always with you; and—and—I wish to see him poor little fellow, while yet I can."

"My darling! what do you mean?" said Mrs. Penrhyn, as the big tears overflowed her eyes; and she pushed back the rich braids of May's bright silken hair and kissed her forehead.

"Now, don't cry, dear; you know you were telling Linda the truth just now, of how much better off those whom God takes are, than those whom He leaves."

"May, you will break my heart! Do see Dr. Marsh. I have perceived for some time that you are *not* well; and yet you persist in saying that you are."

"Because, indeed, dear, I am not ill in body; I have no pain, except a headache sometimes; but I feel that I soon shall be, and that I *want* to be in heaven."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Penrhyn, clasping her hands, as the tears now gushed in torrents from her eyes, "it may well be said that Fortune never comes with both hands full. I am no sooner rejoicing with an overflowing heart of gratitude to God at my dear boy's miraculously-preserved life, at his increasing honors and friends—dear old Mr. Phippen and that good Lord Pendarvis having written me

word of the sword and the company his countrymen and countrywomen have sent him out—but I see you perishing before my eyes, May; and so does your poor dear grandfather, whose heart it is breaking; and you talk of leaving us for ever—and wishing to do so—cruel, cruel May!”

“You know, dear,” said the latter, looking up in her face, with a sort of shadowy, unearthly smile, “that nothing fades so soon as May: but luckily, a thousand better and brighter things come after it, when the meadows are burnished with poor Charley’s favourite kingcups, and the woods and fields are literally clad ‘in a vesture, wrought about with divers colours.’ But I want you to promise me——”

“Anything,—everything,—darling,” wept Mrs Penrhyn, “for I am sure there is nothing you could ask, that I would not and ought not to grant.”

“Well, then, you will let your son marry that beautiful, that kind, that generous lady, Florinda Andover, who has taken such care of and nursed him so well,—will you not? And you won’t mind her nasty family, however disagreeable they may be. Now promise me that you will not?” And as she spoke, the dark pupils of her large starry eyes seemed to dilate; and the light within shone out through her transparent cheek in a crimson tint, like the reflection of a lamp seen through an alabaster vase.

Mary Penrhyn looked at her for a moment with an enquiring, bewildered look, and then said—

“I have told Harcourt that he should have no opposition from me. Lady Florinda herself is a most charming and superior person, whom I could only feel proud to call daughter, and happy to see his wife. If he likes to encounter the low pride of that family, and to entail upon his amiable and devoted wife the thousand humiliations and heartburnings her marriage with him will subject her to from them, that is *his* affair, and not mine. Whatever *my* feelings towards, or my prejudices against them may be, I could never answer it to myself to set *either* up as a barrier between happiness and my own child. It is only where there is sin that duty has a right to put a veto against what is but the impostor sorrow, tricked out in the alluring semblance of happiness; otherwise, I hold that no one human being, whether parent or not, has a right to mar or thwart the happiness of another. Indeed, the greatest objection to me in this marriage is their relationship, distant as it is; as there are a thousand reasons to make marriages between cousins any thing but desirable. But I assure you, dearest child, I never act with reference, much less with deference, to the world’s opinion, persuaded as I am, and as I have always endeavoured to convince you and Linda, that our *motives* alone rise upwards to God’s judgment-seat, while our actions, and men’s opinion of them, eventually sink either in themselves or their consequences.”

"Now I am happy," said May, kissing the hand that was caressing her cheek.

"And yet," urged Mrs. Penrhyn, mournfully, "you will not make Sir Gregory and me happy by consulting Dr. Marsh?"

The gentle girl looked tenderly and earnestly up into the speaker's face, as she took both her hands in her own, and for all answer merely repeated—

"Where is thy balm, O Gilead? where
The great Physician may I see?
Death heard the suffering Christian's prayer,
And said, 'Behold them both in me.'"

"May!" exclaimed Mrs. Penrhyn, looking so intently into the uttermost depths of her eyes as that it was quite impossible that any feeling passing through her heart at that moment could do so without its shadow falling upon them; "May, forgive the question I am going to ask you; but answer me—oh! but *truly*—as if you were upon oath—do you love, do you?"

Here the young girl trembled violently; her lips became livid, and a death-like faintness appeared to be rapidly stealing over her.

"Do you," continued Mrs. Penrhyn, "love Mr. Lethbridge; and does he love you?"

"What an idea!" said May, drawing a long breath, while a smile passed over her beautiful face, that brought all the rosy blood back in a mantling tide to her cheeks and lips. "I can answer," said she, "for not loving him beyond a very sincere liking, which every one who knows him, I think, must feel for him. And *padre Maria!*" added she, more playfully than she had spoken for months, "I think I can also answer for *his* not loving *me*, inasmuch as that he never told me so even in Hebrew, which you know I should have had to interpret backwards into hatred; and I hope and trust he don't *hate* me, however stupid I may be."

Mrs. Penrhyn kissed her forehead. For a moment this unequivocal denial and refutation of her suspicions as to May's having an attachment to Mr. Lethbridge seemed a great relief to her; but the next a clouded expression of care and perplexity seemed to pass over her face, and again kissing May she rose up and went to her own room, for she had need to be alone.

That night Charley's fever left him, for the yeast had produced its usual miraculous effect, so that, for the time being at least, there was a sorrow the less at Baron's Court.

CHAPTER XXV.

AGAIN!

ONCE more the walls of Baron's Court rang with little Charley's merry laugh; he was again up and about, and his pretty hair, with its "innocent wave," was beginning to grow as luxuriantly as ever. And if kindness *could* spoil—which good dispositions it never can—he ran a greater risk than ever of being spoiled, as, from his grandfather down to the herdsman, there was not a soul about the place thought they could ever make enough of him since he had been snatched, as it were, from the jaws of death; and even Miss Charity herself seemed to have put by her nerves on the same shelf with Mr. Twitcher's book, and to cease to think her little grand-nephew troublesome. October, which is such a lovely month in late seasons and well-wooded countries, was now, though half gone, robed in all the varied beauty of the kaleidoscope-tinted foliage, and gilded into additional brightness by the vivid rays of an autumnal sun.

The two sisters with their little brother had been invited to spend the day at Pen-y-Coed, the house of that kind old lady, Mrs. Lewyn; and as Madame Duval, in *Evelina*, never went "*nowhere* without Monsieur Du Bois,"—in like manner, Charley never went any where without his attendant satellites, Swiftpaws and Fluff; and certainly the former, with his brilliant eyes, silver paws, and red-golden ears, was no inapt personation of "*Bright Canis*;" but as he was again bridled with blue ribbons and a splendid blue velvet saddle-cloth, which Linda had made for him, and embroidered in gold, with a monogram in each corner of C.S.F., being Charley's, Swiftpaws', and Fluff's initials, Charley on the present occasion insisted that Fluff should ride to Pen-y-Coed, in consideration of the well known feline objection to wet feet; and had that incomparable personage been the *Shah* of Persia, instead of only a Persian cat, he could not have looked more grandly grave or more overpowered with a sense of his own dignity than did the illustrious Fluff, when mounted on his usual steed, who by no means relished the slow and stately pace which this honor condemned him to. But so it is, in this "*best of all possible worlds*," that those who are ridden *will* champ the bit, and are seldom so content with the dispensations of destiny as those who, like Fluff, are not only seated on velvet, but being kept out of its mire and misery, can, with calm philosophic eye and well-bred equanimity, dominate and contemplate the world from their easy and dignified position.

y, Charley," said May, as he gathered up the blue ribbon

bridle in his hands, as the procession was about to start; "I think as we go along the road the people will take you for one of those travelling show-boys, and give you half-pence for your exhibition."

This idea so tickled Charley's fancy that he improved on it, and, dancing with delight and laughing so loud that Fluff looked perfectly scandalized, he said—"And if they don't give me any of their own accord, I'll ask them for some for my poor dog and cat, who you see Ma'am, or Sir, are *quite starved*; and we have a long—long—way to go to-day; so *pray* give me a half-penny to get one bone for Swiftpaws, and a saucer of milk for Fluff," added he, in a lachrymose whine, putting his head on one side, which got him so kissed by his sisters, that he was obliged to issue a protest, and say—

"Don't, *children*, you'll kiss me to rage."

At length the kissing was over, the cat settled, and the procession moved on, accompanied by Grant, as Mrs. Penrhyn, having many letters to write, remained at home, but promised to go for them in the evening, having well secured May's boa, and seen that she had her clogs on.

"And now, Charley," said she, calling after him as a parting admonition, "mind you don't even *touch*, much less pull about, any of Mrs. Lewyn's things, particularly if she is *not* in the room you are shown into. If you *will* be curious, you can satisfy your curiosity with your eyes; they can neither break nor disarrange any thing; and setting aside the vulgarity of fiddling, there is something dishonorable in prying into people's things when they are not present, and no one likes (independently of the danger of breaking them) to have their knick-knacks unsettled, or finger marks left on the bindings of their books—a legacy which your *fiddlers* invariably bequeath them."

"But you will come early to Mrs. Lewyn's, dear; will you not?" asked May.

"Oh yes, I'll come before tea; and promise me, May, that you will *not* walk about the grounds when you get to Pen-y-Coed, for the walk there is quite enough for you, and on no account must you walk home."

"Ah, but do you know when I was in the library this morning with grandpapa, and he was settling some accounts with Price, I heard Price tell him that poor Titus was ill; and you know he has but one pair of carriage-horses now."

"Well, but my love, Surrey is not ill; and the covered car can go for you, or a fly can be got from Mold. But on no account must you walk home."

And with another final and parting kiss, in which Swiftpaws shared, (as Charley insisted that Mrs. Penrhyn should kiss the two *nutmegs*, as he called the two spots on the dog's head), they at length departed, Mrs. Penrhyn standing at the hall-door looking after them till they were out of sight; and then, with a sigh, she

re-entered the house and went up-stairs to the school-room, where, as a preliminary to writing her own letters, she began re-reading Harcourt's. And, as the usual sequel of so doing, her face was soon bathed in tears, and, leaning her elbows on the table, she covered her face with her hands. While still giving way to this reverie, she heard a knock at the door.

"Come in!" said she, raising her head, and hastily drying her eyes.

And the next moment Mr. Lethbridge entered.

"I—I—beg your pardon," said he—not only hesitating to advance, but almost turning back—"but I thought—that is, I came to give Miss Egerton a lesson this morning, for I feel I have been very remiss of late."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Penrhyn, rising, and herself placing a chair for him, "how unlucky! for they all went about an hour ago, to pass a long day with dear kind Mrs. Lewyn."

"And you did not go?" asked Mr. Lethbridge, biting his lips, which indeed he might have known without asking, since he saw her there before him.

"No, I shall go for them in the evening; but I had several letters to write, and was glad to have the morning to myself."

"I fear I have interrupted you, then?" said he, rising, and making an attempt to go, and yet not going.

"By no means, for indeed I find I have such a headache that I cannot write; so, after all, must put it off to another day."

Here a silence of some seconds ensued; and yet Mr. Lethbridge did not go, but stood upon the order of his going, till his companion, in common politeness, could not but say—

"Pray, don't go; for I assure you, you have not interrupted me."

And he sat down.

Mrs. Penrhyn stirred the fire—a proceeding which, in a silent tête-à-tête, is perhaps quite as useful and satisfactory as a chorus in a Greek play; yet still Mr. Lethbridge kept looking into his hat, as intently as if he had lost some of his ideas and thought they must have fallen into it, and that he should be sure to find them there.

At length, however, he raised his eyes, and said, in a low, hurried, tremulous sort of voice, while a flush suffused his face, mounting even to his temples.

"I saw a paragraph in *The Times* to-day about a company which had been purchased by subscription, and a sword bought and sent out to that heroic young Penrhyn, of the Rifles, whom Sir Gregory has just told me was your son, for he said he felt too proud of him to conceal the fact any longer; so if I am indiscreet, you must pardon me and blame him; but—but—I cannot resist congratulating you with all my heart. And yet I am sorry to see the traces of tears on your face; but happily there are tears of joy, as well as of tribulation."

"Thank you for your congratulations. I need not tell you how gratefully and cordially I receive them; but, in truth, the triumphs of war must be always tempered with tribulation; for we never can tell how soon death may swallow up victory. But I think my tears this morning were not so much on my son's account, as for one whose gentle goodness and pure unrippled nature has made her almost as dear to me as my own child; I mean dear May. Have you not remarked of late, Mr. Lethbridge, how terribly altered she is; and what a perfect shadow she is becoming?"

"Yes, I have been grieved to see her looking so thin and ill; but I thought, poor child, that perhaps she was growing too fast."

"Ah! I fear it is more than that," said Mrs. Penrhyn, as the tears again streamed down her cheeks, "so young, so good; it is hard; for though fit for Heaven, she scarcely seems ripe for death."

"You know," said Mr. Lethbridge, taking her hand, pressing it gently within his own, and looking earnestly into her face with an expression at once of profound sympathy and deep love,—

" 'Tis not the wrinkles years bestow,
The failing eyes, the locks of snow,
Nor time, that makes the sage;
But *wisdom* is the hoary head,
And 'tis the life unspotted led
That forms the ripe old age."

And death, though humanity never passes it without a shudder, is but Heaven's portal, after all; and who so fitted to gain admittance there as such pure, white-winged spirits as May Egerton's."

"True, indeed; but it is not even my own selfishness that bows me down, and causes me to struggle against God's will—if it be His will to recall to its eternal home that young bright soul—as that I fear May has something on her mind which she will not divulge, and which is rapidly mining her existence."

"We have all something on our minds," sighed Mr. Lethbridge, looking down upon the little hand he still held in his, and then up into her face, while the deep soft velvet azure of his eyes floated in diamond water, which wanted little to make it overflow in tears. "We have all something on our minds, some mysterious link vibrating between the Creator and the created. Our outward bearing and material actions, like the wires of the electric telegraph, run along the highways of life for all to see, and all to comment upon; but the harnessed lightning, the subtle fluid, that moves these outward agents, its mandate and its mission are known alone to their Author, and to those whom they concern."

"True," said she; "but though life itself is but one long

enigma, of which death is the only real solution, and though while we continue on this side the grave, we are surrounded with mystery as with an atmosphere, yet *one* unerring and unalienable certainty we *do* inherit—namely, the knowledge that we all *must* die. But even athwart this one certainty still rolls the dark cloud of doubt, for there lives not, who knows the *how*, *when*, or *where*, of their death."

"Generally, it is so ; and yet I think I know how I shall die."

She looked at him with a mingled expression of surprise and inquiry.

"Yes. The die is cast, and you *shall* know it, too," he rejoined, in answer to her look ; while now pressing the hand he still held closely within both of his, and looking up into her face so earnestly that it was impossible that the slightest expression passing over it could escape him ; "I said I knew how I should die—it will be of a broken heart—unless—unless—you will not only accept but reciprocate—the all-absorbing love which I have so long struggled against, only to be at length completely vanquished by it, and to lay it with myself, my life, and my fate at your feet. You cannot reject one without for ever crushing all—surely you will not ! you cannot, with that face of angel-softness, have a heart hard enough to do this !"

"Me ! love me ? Impossible !" said she, rising up as if she had regained her feet by electricity ; while, though for a moment a deep flush suffused her face, only to be succeeded the next by a mortal pallor, there was over her whole countenance but one broad blank expression of unfeigned astonishment.

"Yes, impossible ! That is impossible, to help doing so," said he, also arising and putting his arm round her waist.

At length she said, gently disengaging herself from that support and leaning on the mantelpiece—

"Why ! I am old enough to be your mother !"

"Were you old enough to be my grandmother, and still what you are in appearance, I could only see in you not only the most beautiful, but the most noble-minded, noble-hearted, and loveable of women ;—and so seeing, I could not choose but love you as I do, better than all other things here below ; better, oh ! far better than life itself, which, without you, I feel will be insupportable. Then tell me, at least, that you do not *hate* me, and I'll hope, I'll wait, I'll try to make you love me."

"Hate you !"

"Well, no. That is too strong a word, for I don't think you *could* inspire so much love to repay it with hate ; which is seldom sown but by injury and outrage ; but tell me at least, that you do not resent my presumption."

"Alas ! folly is not always presumption ; but it *is* always folly, under whatsoever name sophistry may baptize it ; and I—I hoped, that is, I thought, you loved May. She is so loveable, so beauti-

ful, and not too young in a year or two to have been your wife; and as many years difference as exists between her age and yours, in youth on her side, does not make so great a disparity;—whereas, when the winter is on the side of the wife, and the summer on that of the husband, the world may only laugh. But Nature, who ever asserts her own rights, and vindicates her own cause, is sure, sooner or later, to make us pay the reckoning."

"May!" echoed he, as if in his turn awaking from a dream; "yes, I have loved her, and do love her, as what she is, a beautiful and engaging child—a something gentle and fair, with the balm and breath of spring about it—a promise and a hope, making sweet harmony, and blent into one like the delicate perfume of the little flower whose name she bears. But—but—" added he, approaching her, and again taking her hand, "it was this hand that trained the May, which twined around my heart the all of happiness it has ever known. Oh, do not then rudely destroy your own work; but still tend what you have planted, and *may* blight, but *never* can uproot."

"Do you know," said she, not withdrawing her hand, and looking kindly and earnestly into his eyes, "I have often wished you were my second son: I should have been so proud of—so glad in you. Let me then *be* your mother. That I am capable of being, and fit to be; and believe me there is no love so holy, and so quintessential as that of a mother."

"Mary!" he exclaimed, raising both her hands to his lips, and kissing them passionately, "I will not kneel *even to you*, the fairest, wisest, best of God's creations—for to Him alone is such *outward* worship due; but could I but bare my heart, my soul before you, you would there see all that to a mother was due, of the most tender and yearning respect, but at the same time, all that a woman can inspire of the deepest, and most devoted love. And love is a *divinus afflatus*, a psychological ether, which admits of no intermediate nebulae or vacuum. Friendship has a sphere of its own, but never can approach, much less attain to that of love."

"And still less can a lost Pleiad, that has once tripped against a cloud and shot from out its orbit. What I mean is," sighed she, "that even were our years equal, our hearts are not so: yours is fresh and young, full of high hopes and pleasant vistas; mine is hoary with Time's moss of many cares, and no prospects,—only dreary retrospects."

"That, indeed, is poor logic; for who would not refer one of those torn and time-touched Titians from the neglected walls of the Barbarigi, to the newest and most vivid sign-post ever painted."

"No—no—" said she, with a sigh, turning away her face, "I should have loved you first. A wreck is no fitting exchange for an argosy."

"That depends. It may be that something may be saved from

the wreck, more precious, more costly than the whole freight of the argosy. I do not think that, had I known you in the first radiance and untempered bloom of youth, I should, or even *could*, have loved you then, as I do now; for then, what I most love in you could not have existed. It is that gentle and generous heart of yours—that brave noble nature—ever rising instead of sinking under the tyranny of fate—that strength to bear the burdens God ordains; that courage to resist those men would impose, that has made of you a sort of spiritual Gideon, and moral Joan of Arc; and, my heart having dared to yearn after so high a standard, nothing less, or nothing lower will satisfy it."

"Ah!" said she, mournfully, "I am not vain enough to accept your flattering estimation of my poor huckaback work-a-day qualities, nor worthless enough to take advantage of it. You have never even seen me tried; for here, what have I to bear but the most constant, the most affectionate, the most generous kindness."

"And," said he, interrupting her, "a better, or more infallible test of your nature than the congenial manner you respond to that kindness, the affluence of gratitude with which you repay it, and the minutely conscientious manner in which you credit its every item, I could not have. Besides, before I knew even your real name, Sir Gregory had given me your whole history, with an enthusiasm of admiration for the strength and rectitude of your character, which his own is fully capable of appreciating. So you see I may be, and *am* presumptuous; but I am neither deluded nor infatuated. Oh! do not then refuse to give me your heart, priceless as the treasure is; since you find that I am so far deserving of it as to be fully aware of its value."

"I can but repeat," said she, as the tears overflowed her eyes, "that I should have loved you first, for assuredly Horace Lethbridge deserves something better than the withered branches of a heart whose first fruits Andover Penrhyn did not think worth a care."

"Of that you must allow Horace Lethbridge to be the best judge. In the first place, I am no great admirer of first fruits, or rather first buds, for leaves and blossoms are fragile flimsy things; easily scattered by every wind; and even the fruits of young trees are crude and flavourless, as in all things maturity is necessary to perfection, but more especially in human passions and feelings, which, in early youth, are, for the most part, mere rash indiscriminating instincts, but especially that which we mistake for Love, which is, nine times out of ten, but the *shadow* his coming casts before, but, as a god it has sufficient of the *lux umbra dei* to make us eagerly expand the wings of our souls to catch its rays, mistaking it for the full meridian of that uncreated and all-penetrating light in which we shall bask hereafter. No, Mary," continued he, drawing her towards him and kissing the tears off of her cheeks, while his own mingled with them the while, "you cannot make

me regret a part of which I have no reason to be jealous, for you were only then (from a very incompetent master, who could not impart what he did not himself know) learning the rudiments of that great mystery I was to teach you hereafter. You did not, you could not love him; you shall, you *will* love me!"

"And," said she, raising her head and looking at him with a tender, yet complex and melancholy expression through her tears, "perhaps be wrecked again—like those vessels which go down without even the warrant of a storm, in broad daylight, beneath an unclouded sky, and amid the circling treacheries of a calm, waveless sea, Horace. Time will be that circling treachery to me."

"Never!" cried he, passionately pressing her to his heart; "never! till he has first engulfed me."

"Ah!" she resumed, "you think you know me, but you don't. With the hues of imagination you paint me an angel: whereas, in reality, I fear I have much more of the devil in me. I have never been tried but by those negative marriage pains and penalties, neglect and desertion; but I think, had I been tried, as some are, by every outrage, every injury cemented with insult, every persecution planned and executed with the most fabulous blackguardism, slimed over with a pompous public hypocrisy, and *chevaux de frised* with lies and perjuries, verily, I think I should have taken the law into my own hands; and, despising so cordially as I do the conventional cant of our *moral* society, which I know to be leprous with vice and petrified with hypocrisy, I should have publicly exposed, in damning *facts*, unveiled by a single fiction, and undiluted by a single digression, a cowardly villany against which *public* exposure is the only safeguard, and consequently for which it is the only remedy. From *you* I am well aware I have nothing of this sort to fear; yet that, perhaps, ought to be an additional reason for my not being so selfish as to accept a happiness which, under our present disgraceful legal and social code, so few have, and fewer can hope for. For who are our law-makers? Men who either have passed, or are passing, their lives in law-breakings, with Lord Chancellors, who have qualified themselves for the office and graduated in ecclesiastical knowledge by themselves having figured as defendants in *crim. con.* cases, and passed the best of their years in violating the laws of God and destroying that peace of families which, in the drags of their existence, under favour of horsehair and humbug, they are deputed to arbitrate upon. Under such a state of things it is impossible that society can be anything but what it is—rotten and hollow to its very core; or that marriage can be other than what it is—namely, a blasphemous, one-sided mockery, a saturnalia for men, and a Draco-like tyranny against women. We hear, it is true, of our 'moral Court;' but as long as not only such men but such women are received at it, the less said about its morality the better. It would be a curious experiment in natural philosophy, and form a still more

curious chapter in history, were Prince Albert suddenly to indulge that inquiring mind of his by taking a leaf out of the books of some of those gentry whom Her Majesty delights to honor. Now, having the use of my eyes and ears, I plead guilty to being perfectly incapable of man-worship in its catholic sense—that is, a tacit acknowledgment of the superiority of men as a sex, and a blind and deferential sort of mental genuflection to their self-delegated Pope-like infallibility; though where, individually, I meet with a man before whom Diogenes might have broken his lantern, and whose only approach to the wisdom does not consist in his having the sensuality of Solomon, I am very willing to concentrate all that respect and admiration, which cannot diffuse in a general worship, into a sincere and particular homage.”

“And that is one of the chief sources of my respect and love for you; for I think, if there is any one thing more revolting than another, it is that inane, indiscriminate, and indelicately demonstrative adulation and admiration which English women—no, but ‘British females,’ as that class of women most appropriately call themselves—have for men as a sex. With regard to everything else you say, it is equally and indisputably true; but all these abuses arise out of that tissue of solemn shams, that veneration for names and externals, which is the plague-spot of England, religiously, morally, socially and politically. A sect or a system is *per se* good; therefore no matter how flagrant the abuses that may creep into them, or how grossly their professors may deviate from the tenets of the one, or the principles of the other; let any one have the conscience or the temerity to expose the mal-practices of individuals, and point out their heresies, *ho!* Cant immediately flies to the rescue, and Twaddle, with its heavy truncheon, loaded with the prejudices of ages, lays about it in all directions, vociferating that the sect or the system is in danger. It is for this reason that murder and every other species of immorality and debauchery may desecrate the Sabbath in moral England, as long as their orgies are held *within* the dark and chartered purlieus of vice, and proceed to the *outward* obligatory accompaniment of church bells. To interfere with this progress of crime, when so conducted upon orthodox principles, would be to infringe the liberty of the subject. It is only to lure them from these sinks of iniquity into the fresh air and under the free sky—that great dome of God’s universal temple—by the humanizing influences of harmonious sounds on the sole day want allows them a respite from labour, that revolts the lip-worship of our Sabbatarians. *Only go to church.* When there, you may sleep, make assignations, or pick pockets; that is of little consequence; the outward act of *going to church* is the thing they stickle for; and in continuation of this Pharisaical blasphemy, murderers, on the rare occasions which the philanthropic cant of the day allows them to pay the forfeit of their crimes, are made to pledge the gallows by profaning the

Eucharist. But to show how well this veneering and varnish system works, and prove to what a charming state of universal good will to men, we are *outwardly* and *verbally* brought, the benevolence of the British public is occasionally regaled with such interesting *Memories of Sunny Lands* as a piece of *Convict Court Journal* from Australia, announcing that 'Miss Emily Sandford,' Mr. Rush, the murderer's mistress, is '*quite well, and has a sweet little boy by Rush!*' or a bit of *Old Bailey Morning Post*, in the shape of a *bulletin* extraordinary, informing the anxious British public that on his removal from Stafford Gaol the amiable Mr. William Palmer was looking remarkably well, and that his health had not in the least suffered from his imprisonment. Everything in England, morally and politically, from our total disregard of the *spirit*, and cavilling deferential reverence for the *letter*, is calculated not only to encourage, but to protect, vice; and it does so with a vengeance. I remember when my Lady G——e was ambassadress at Paris, some one expressing both regret and disgust at the too bad conduct of that English Messalina, Lady —— who, though her husband *was* a profligate, yet still he was not more so than the average run of English fashionable husbands, and was so far better that he had never personally ill-used her, or calumniated her, which latter he would indeed have found it difficult to do; but upon Lady ——'s conduct being thus animadverted upon, my Lady G——e's charming rejoinder was, 'Oh, poor thing; in her position one is so much obliged to her for whatever she does *not* do. Now Lady ——, for instance, had better have twenty lovers a day than *say* the things of *her husband* that she does.' The lady alluded to had a most loathsomely infamous husband in every way that could be conceived; but as she did not make herself either useful or agreeable at the English Embassy, in the former lady's style of 'poor-thing' celebrity, of course there was neither pity nor toleration for *her*. And this is a fair average of the *élite* of English society, where, the more vicious both women as well as men are, the better they get on. The only unpardonable offence either can be guilty of is *verbally* infringing its conventionalities; for what the sin against the Holy Ghost is in the Church, *that* is against the *unholy* ghost in society. But the root of all this, both in Church and State, is Mammon-worship. Here is a nice little instance of episcopal charity, toleration and benevolence. Many years ago a lady ran away from her six children and a very kind husband; or it is generally those women who have no provocation to misconduct who do these things. The case was a flagrant one, of great scandal, and the poor husband, being irreproachable, had no difficulty in getting a divorce—when the lady's paramour married her. In course of time he became a rich peer, and returned to the very neighbourhood (his property being now situated there) of her former husband. Of course those persons who remembered

her heartless and unprovoked elopement did not conceive that a coronet had by any means extinguished the sin, and therefore would not visit her; but the bishop of the diocese, true to his Christian mission of peace-maker, himself went round the neighbourhood to remonstrate with the people, and try and persuade them to call on her—not on the score of her being a repentant Magdalen—not on the score that sin may be effaced by prayer and sorrow—not on the score that as we hope for mercy we should show it. No; all this would have been trite, puerile, and primitive, and, as such, beneath a Right Reverend Prelate of the nineteenth century; his lordship's arguments were far more cogent and, therefore, calculated to have more weight, for he represented to them what a dreadful thing it would be for the neighbourhood if, by not visiting Lady —, *they drove a man of Lord —'s wealth out of it to spend his money elsewhere.* This was speaking by the card; and accordingly the next day the cards showered in upon Lady —. With all these 'wise saws and modern instances' fresh in my memory, you cannot suppose—oh! noble, honest, and true-hearted woman—that I am shocked at your heterodox opinions. Far from it; the person who does *not* indignantly revolt at the horrible and colossal want of all principle, the abject Mammon-worship which is now the established religion of English society, and who has not the courage, openly and honestly, to express that indignation, only proves that they are one of the units of this corruption, the two main sewers of which are literature and politics; and all cliques of each, thanks to the clever unscrupulous *vauz rien*, who are the magnets of both, are now rapidly fusing into one great radical curve of infamy, whose orbit is SELF, and whose foci is POWER. No, best, and, because best, bravest of women, it is for this high-minded courage, this noble independence, that I love, that I venerate you; but, at the same time, knowing to what fearful odds such single and exceptional natures are exposed from the treacherous legions in the guerilla war of society, I would henceforth claim the proud privilege of throwing myself into the breach between you and them. As long as you are under the roof of so excellent and amiable a man as Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, you are safe, and the storm may rage as it will without, its echoes cannot harm you; but I *shudder* when I think of what your fate *might* be, thrown on the world in so cruel and false a position—"

"Ah!" interrupted she, "every fresh instance you give me of your disinterested generosity only increases my gratitude, my—"

She hesitated.

"Say it, Mary," said he, pressing her hand within both of his, and looking imploringly into her eyes—

"My love!" murmured she, in a low voice, and she hid her face upon his shoulder.

"Ten thousand blessings on you for that Word! Oh! let me kiss it into my heart—there to remain for ever more. Mary, you

have said it—you cannot recall it; and so full is the measure of my happiness, that now Fate has not another hope, or another fear left for me."

"I *have said it*," said she, raising her head and placing both her hands upon his shoulders; "but what a folly! for again, I repeat it, you are young enough to be my son, and I ought to show my love by shielding you, and preventing your committing such a folly—and——"

"Nonsense!" interrupted he, drawing her to the sofa, and seating himself beside her as he still retained her hand; "to hear you talk, Mary mine, one would really think that we were both fools, who could not afford to be even *suspected* of a folly; whereas we are quite wise enough, and I at least am sufficiently happy, to be capable of committing a thousand!"

"Well, then," said she, "your grandmother must interpose her *authority* to prevent your doing so." And she held up her finger menacingly, which hand he seized as well as the other, and, covering it with kisses, said—

"No grandmother, if you please, for *that* is a *mauvais plaisanterie*; as the Table of Affinity forbids a man to marry his grandmother, which, by the bye, till lately, I have always thought a very supererogatory commandment; but, thanks to the march of Intellect, and the counter-marches of Mammon, I now see that it was a prophetic necessity; for in the present day, I verily believe men would not only marry their own, but the Devil's maternal progenitress, for MONEY."

"Well, *that* at all events you certainly won't do," smiled she; "but I was going to tell you, when you interrupted me, of another barrier to your folly and to my madness, which is, that nothing could induce me to be so ungrateful to dear, good, noble-hearted Sir Gregory, as to leave my three darlings, while I can be, or he thinks I can be, of the slightest use to them."

"Now listen to a few 'Hints from Horace!' I have thought of all that, though you do seem to have formed such an exaggerated idea of my '*folly*!'—but as you, by your own confession, are in a still more deplorable condition, being a poor maniac, I began by reflecting that after the luxuries and *bien être* of Baron's Court the destitutions and deprivations of an itinerant curacy might be *rather* distasteful to you; and so last week, when Sir Gregory (who, as I need not tell you, is always inventing wants for himself, as an unsuspected means of conferring benefits upon others) asked me, as a *great favour, of course*, to commence Charley's classical or assical education, and for that purpose, to take up my abode permanently at Baron's Court, I *kindly* consented to do so. But you must not upon that account suppose that I have not ample means of furnishing even a rectory, if I could get one, let alone a curacy; for do you remember a little book I brought you some time ago, called *Confessions of a Village Curate*, which you were graciously

pleased, all in ignoring the author, to send me so flattering a critique of? Well," continued he, taking out of his waistcoat-pocket a bank-post-bill for £732 1s. 9d., and putting it into her hand—"this is the result of the Curate's Confessions, and being indisputably the best part of them, may be considered as the Absolution. At all events it is an act of grace on the part of the publisher, which I only wish could be made more catholic, for a universal postal arrangement decreeing that no letter should contain less than £732 1s. 9d., would cure a great many heart-aches, and right a great many wrongs. But this, coming to live at Baron's Court is, I assure you, as the linen-draper's express it, parting with myself 'at a tremendous sacrifice!' For as I know my own little wife to be the very best housekeeper in the whole world, it would have been very darling to see her engineering away all the difficulties in a nut-shell home of one's own, to say nothing of that greatest of all marital luxuries, the having a person legally responsible for everything that went wrong in this terrestrial treadmill of ours, from a limp shirt-collar to an unartistically dressed leg of mutton, and being able to feel, or at least to say, '*Mrs. Lethbridge, it is entirely your fault.*'"

"As I fear, in sober sadness," said she, between a smile and a tear, "every evil of your life *would be*—if—if—you marry—for therein all the evil lies—a woman old enough to be your mother. And besides, there's Harcourt—what will *he* think of his mother's folly, or rather her madness?"

"It would be wrong in me, certainly," said he, with a gravity so solemnly profound, that it amounted to a finer stroke of ridicule than the most cutting sarcasm could have achieved—"decidedly wrong, to urge you to *disobey* or do anything *undutiful* towards your son. Still, from some of his letters that you have been good enough to let me read, and from his own achievements, I should not think he was the sort of person to draw the cord of his *just authority* too tight; but that, on the contrary, while he is playing cricket with red-hot shells, he would rather feel more comfortable that another life was equally devoted, and ready to be risked as freely for his mother as he is ever willing to hazard his for his country. Tell me, Mary, *my* Mary, don't you now, in your heart of hearts, think he *will*?"

"I *do* think," said she, bursting into tears, and again hiding her face on his shoulders, "that what may be folly in me, will be wisdom in him; and that he, like me, will find it impossible not to love one so supremely worthy of all love as you."

"Oh, Mary!" cried he, straining her closely to his bosom,—
"let your own heart hear and feel *how* happy, how proud, it has made mine; and it will not doubt, for it cannot but believe that its very pulsation is a reiterated vow, *never* to cherish you less, nor to be less worthy of you, than I am at this moment, when, in receiving me into the holy sanctuary of your love, you have bound

ne to you by ties which not even death can sever; for I feel, that that time has begun eternity *must*, and will continue; and that that are but mute quivering hearts *here*, will be exulting souls, used in one ray of quenchless light *there*, where planets pace un-rearied sentinels."

"And even *here*, Mary, the blossoms our hearts have now put brth shall feel no winter's breath of coldness or of change; for are they not sheltered beneath Faith's cherub wing. So that even at the last, when we succumb to Death's stroke, we shall not feel his sting."

"You will not, I verily believe," said she, "whose life is passed in filling up your title-deeds for Heaven, and over all whose ways the Sacred Dove does indeed seem to brood—

'Ripening thy soul apace.'

but with me it is different; for I sometimes feel as if the future would be too short to regret the past."

"A very wrong feeling, very unlike my own brave-hearted Mary; and above all, a totally useless one; for with me you shall have no rest, and the only danger will be, or would be, were we mere mortals, that the future will not be long enough for us to enjoy it; at *that*, with all others, is a branch of economy which I shall expect you to attend to, Mrs. Lethbridge,—or if you don't, you shall be well kissed."

"Take care," smiled she, "for, once married, there is apt to be an error in the orthography of that word, and what *was* kissed may be *pié de la lettre* become kicked; and I am going the right way to merit this matrimonial *spell*, for I was very nearly forgetting and almost losing your seven hundred pounds, which I think is little enough for that most charming book. But here it is," added he, taking it up off of the carpet, and holding it out to him.

"No, no," said he, "I want you to keep it as a beginning of 'With all my worldly goods I thee endow;' and to convince you that mine is not Mrs. Partington's version of that ritual, as she says from her experience, which is far from being an exceptional one, that, according to practical and ecclesiastical interpretation, it only means giving a wife a three-and-sixpenny cotton gown once a year; all the rest going upon the *indispensable* requirements of the husband."

"Ah! je comprends," laughed she, shaking her head at him; "vous voulez absolument mon beau, Monsieur, que je prends les chaînes de ma servitude."

"Juste! ma chérie, an effet c'est ma marotte."

"Allons! soumettons nous; la marée soutient," said she, humbly casting down her eyes and making him a low curtsy.

"Bien, fort bien!" laughed he, "rappelle toi toujours."

"Que—

'La femme elle n'est là que pour la dépendance,
Du côté de la barbe, est la toute puissance.'

Here the half-hour dinner bell rang.

"The dinner gong! Is it possible? Why, it is only three o'clock," said he, looking at his watch.

"Yes; we dine at three to-day, in order that I may go early to Mrs. Lewyn's to bring home the children."

"But remember, Mrs. Lethbridge, *not* to walk the roads *alone* at ten o'clock at night, for your *husband* don't approve of it."

"And what is a far more effectual preventative," said she, making up a little mouth and looking pertly at him, as she put both hands in her apron pockets, "his wife don't approve of it either."

"Madam," cried he, seizing her, and kissing her forehead, eyes, and mouth, "such speeches cannot be too soon checked."

And he had scarcely time to check this one before the door opened, and Gifford came with "Miss Kempenfelt's and Sir Gregory's compliments, and that they hoped Mr. Lethbridge would stay to dinner?"

Mr. Lethbridge was of course very happy to do so; whereupon Gifford informed him that his room was quite ready, and that Mr. Twitcher was below, and was also quite ready, as he was going to dine there too.

Upon Gifford's entrance, Mary Penrhyn having hastily replaced her letters and papers, and locked her desk, went to her own room to bathe her face and arrange her hair; and as she went, in hastily summing up all Mr. Lethbridge's good qualities, she placed on the very first of the list of minor ones, his delicacy and absence of all vulgar-mindedness, in never having in the most remote manner even alluded to his future prospects of wealth and rank. And as she continued to fill in the picture with a thousand other equally attractive traits, and the ordonnance of it grew upon her, she ended by gradually feeling herself raised on a pedestal in her own estimation, to have inspired such a man with so deep, and, at the same time, so exalted and disinterested a love; but when, on reaching her room, she cast a furtive look at the glass, and it reflected back her face, flushed with excitement, and her eyes red with weeping, she could not help exclaiming aloud, as she brusquely strained back her hair, as if it had been to blame, (as indeed, in a great measure it had, being exceedingly luxuriant, soft, chestnut, satiny hair)—

"Poor young man, what an infatuation!" And then, as suddenly letting it all down, and brushing one side of it in such a pausing, absent, listless manner, that she looked more like a person mechanically endeavouring to complete her toilet in a state of somnambulism, than a lady hurrying down to an early dinner, as she added aloud—

"But, Harcourt! Harcourt! What *will* he think of it?"

And at that very moment, Harcourt, who had refused to return to England, and had once more rejoined his regiment—having only

availed himself of three, of his six months' leave—and who had not yet received his mother's answer to his last letter written on board "The Esmeralda," was walking up and down before his own hut, the cold north-east wind blowing diluted icicles into his eyes, in return for straining them far across into the roads, where that coquettish little craft used to ride at anchor—his arms tightly folded, and his lips bitten, as if they were superfluous appendages that he was determined to rid himself off—was in his own mind saying—

"I wonder what my mother *will* say?"

And so—and so—the wheel goes round; the same gyrations for each and all, the only difference being, whether we are on an upper or lower spoke of it, or merely fixed, as a dignified and unbiassed spectator, in the lynch-pin. In a word, whether we are *under* it in the mire, or at the top of it, and VERY SUCCESSFUL.

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH MR. TWITCHER ANNOUNCES HIS HEROIC CONDUCT IN HAVING JOINED THE MILITIA, SINCE THE RUMOURS OF PEACE WERE DAILY APPROACHING NEARER TO A CERTAINTY; AND ALSO DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF AS A GRAND HOMME DE BOUCHE. AN ARGUMENT. AN ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH DESPATCH.

MIRABEAU said of Necker "that he was the victim of his own ambition, and the martyr of his own success—that he was the jest of courtiers, and the idol of the mob—that he had neither country nor friends—neither a series of political principles, nor a knowledge of mankind—that he only sought applause but never thought of securing esteem—that he understood neither the present nor the future, and had just sufficient intellectual force to goad him into aspiring after the first offices of State, while he was totally destitute of the talents that could give them utility and fame." Alas! how many heirs has the financier left to these attributed antithetical cravings of his impotent ambition, with this difference, that in these days of microscopic meanness and retrenchment in all things save cant, vice and humbug, not the screw, but the screw-propeller is applied! And among these heirs in curtailed proportions figured Mr. Twitcher, who was pre-eminently the victim of his own ambition, without, on that account, being a martyr to any sort of success whatever; but he was the victim of his own ambition in this, that the trouble he gave himself to attain to a ridiculous and unenviable notoriety, far exceeded in arduousness the labours of the most useful and self-sacrificing

member of society that ever existed. Since we last had the pleasure of seeing him, he had super-added to the structure of his literary Castle in the Air a political story, the architecture being of that species denominated "a folly;" so that he had now the felicity of being member for Muddle-cum-Fudge, and constituting an additional ornament (?) to my Lord Oaks's party. But as all M.P.'s seem to consider themselves great guns, and consequently to bear in mind that the greater the *bore* the greater the report, even when only in the rudiments of parliamentary humbug, they leap at once into the fifty-ass-power boredom, of crammed speeches and adjourned debates; and Mr. Twitcher, with his own pre-disposition and ready-laid foundation for literary puffery, and political jobbery, was no exception to the rule, and was quite up to the times in his cravings for applause, without, in the least, caring for esteem, which was so far fortunate,—as the former is easily obtained, being in the gift of fools, whereas merit alone can insure the analytic tribute of esteem. In plain English, then, Mr. Twitcher was more egotistical, more inflated, and in every respect a greater bore than ever; or, as Miss Charity expressed it, "the man was an ambulating inverse martyrdom, for *he* stoned people to death with St. Stephen's." Upon the present occasion she and Sir Gregory had very nearly given up the ghost, as he had not spared them *one* of the "*hits*" (?), as he called them, which he meant to deal out as soon as the House met, upon the mismanagement of the war and the fall of Kars,—not, seemingly being of opinion that by-gones should be by-gones, and thinking like many more equal geniuses, that impromptus made at leisure, like javelins hurled from a distance, fell with a double force. As he was taking Miss Kempenfelt in to dinner, he further informed her, that despite his mother's objections, he was going to vent his military ardour, and acquire additional popularity among his constituency, by enrolling himself in the Muddle-cum-Fudge Militia.

"Well," said Miss Charity, in answer to this interesting announcement, "you *will* be a hero, Mr. Twitcher, as the *on dit* on every side is, that we shall soon have peace."

"It's the principle—it's the principle—Miss Kempenfelt," rejoined he pompously, with, at the same time, a look of amiable condescension, such as Cæsar might have assumed in deigning to explain his strategy to Calphurnia; "every Briton should be trained to deeds of arms."

"It must be the principle, I suppose," matter of facted she, "for neither the pay nor the patronage is much in those militia regiments; so it can't be the *interest*. But as for deeds of arms, I think in the Muddle-cum-Fudge Militia they seem trained to deeds of legs, as six of the men ran away again last week."

Upon seating themselves—

"I fear, Mr. Twitcher," said Sir Gregory, "you won't be able to dine at this primitive hour; but my little people are passing the

day at Mrs. Lewyn's, and we are dining early, to give Mrs. Pemble the power of going to bring them home."

But Mr. Twitcher, who appeared greatly to approve of the faultless *purée à la bisque* that he was discussing with far more ability than any political question he had yet grappled with, assured him that among the practical phases of his character, was that of an impartial and unbiassed appetite, which enabled him to eat equally well at all hours—an assertion he fully corroborated by the vigorous siege he forthwith commenced against the first course; till having, after several most successful skirmishes with *all the entrées*, returned for the "second time of asking," to the saddle of mutton. Mr. Lethbridge, fearing it might soon deserve to lose its title as a *piece de resistance*, and therefore pausing with the carving knife suspended *à la sword of Damocles*, over its greatly diminished glories, said—

"There is a second course, Twitcher."

Sir Gregory, who was very nearly laughing outright, at this broad hint, legitimized his smile by saying, "Go on, Lethbridge, for perhaps Mr. Twitcher is like *another* (?) very learned gentleman, the venerable Dr. Courayer, who lived, by the bye, till ninety-five; but when he was in England, dining one day at a lady's, he also seemed to patronise what Lord Chesterfield used to call 'cellar stuff, and kitchen stuff,'—to wit, the first course. When the second made its appearance, the lady of the house asked him what he would take. 'Oh! pardon me, Madam,' said he, 'and don't tax an old man with profaneness, when I assure you that seldom, through a long life, have I trusted to Providence for a second course.'"

Mr. Lethbridge and Mrs. Penrhyn both laughed at the *à propos* of this anecdote; but Mr. Twitcher seemed to view it solely in a utilitarian and statistical light; and as he announced to Gifford his intention of taking another glass of champagne, he merely observed, that "Dr. Courayer seemed to have been like himself, a *practical* man, and have always seized the present, and never have trusted to the future; more especially where the granting the supplies was concerned."

"How gets on the Hebrew, Lethbridge?" asked Sir Gregory.

"Very well indeed, as far as Miss Egerton is concerned; but I am sorry to say I have been rather remiss of late;" and the stolen glance he gave to Mary Penrhyn caused her to colour to her very temples.

"Perhaps it is as well that you have," sighed Sir Gregory, "for, poor dear child, she looks wretchedly ill—so ill that I wanted to take her to Llandidno or Tenby; but she seemed so averse, from the idea of leaving home, that I ceased to press it."

"I think it is that she grows so very fast," said Mr. Lethbridge.

"Ahem!" cried Mr. Twitcher, at length, resting on his oars, leaning back in his chair, and looking and feeling like a man who

had done *his* part, and that *more* could not be reasonably expected from him, at least for the *present*. So twitching up his spectacles, he said with a smile, which he intended to be very sarcastic and superior—

"Ahem! Do you think it advisable to teach women Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, and all that sort of thing? Don't you think it is putting them too much on a par with us, and, above all, taking them too completely out of their own sphere, which is a strictly domestic and subordinate one?"

"There is a very clever writer of the present day," rejoined Mr. Lethbridge, "who has expressed his jocular alarm upon the strides women have made in America in masculine professions, by saying, 'Fancy a lady a wrangler, either in the common, or the Cambridge sense of the term; I would as soon the one as the other. When you heard her talk of *pie*, you would never think she meant 3'14159.' And truly I must say that on the slightest projected amelioration of the laws against women being mooted, men seem to be instantly smitten with a prophetic plague of pies and puddings being swept from the earth, out of the catalogue of womanly achievements, and at the very *least*, 3'14159—*strong-minded*, sea-serpent, *sesquipedalian*—words furnished as a contingent to every female tongue in lieu of them. Now the Miss Egertons, for instance, though guilty of having their minds and intellects expanded to the uttermost, as their hearts are expanded with them, have found the just equilibrium of the many-sided capacity which God bestows in greater and lesser degrees on *all* human souls, without any reference or restriction to sex; and therefore, despite their superior intellectual acquirements, or rather on account of them, those young ladies are not only incomparable housekeepers,—but, to use your favourite word, Mr. Twitcher—excellent *practical* cooks, and in every way thoroughly *useful* as well as agreeable members of society."

"Oh, of course," said Mr. Twitcher, "there are always exceptions to every rule; but as a principle, I must say, I think it is a great mistake to enlighten and emancipate women. There was a very good article to that effect the other day in *Blackwood*, on the Rights of Woman Question,—saying, that although the laws now existing against them, and giving them no earthly control over their property, or anything else, were certainly hard; yet, to have them repealed, and power and protection awarded to woman, would do away with that charming and *feminine* reliance on men, which was one of woman's greatest attractions; and, therefore, it was better that things should remain as they were."

"Much better, for very infamous and utterly unprincipled men, like some of the contributors to *Blackwood*, who, was there a single law for the protection of women, could not certainly with impunity indulge in such outrageous iniquity, or such a *béchamel* of God's commandments and human decencies as they do; neither could

there be such a *sui generis* in their blackguardism, all of which, the right of might authorizes, and the conventional seal of silence on the lips of the victim wife secures. But, as I said before, knowing who the chief contributor to *Blackwood* is, such an article has as good a grace in its pages as if some humane person, having discovered a method by which poor animals might be converted into beef and mutton, without being first goaded, and driven, and ultimately having their throats cut, a round-robin from all the butchers would have, owning that certainly the poor things were greatly tortured, but that still, it was better that things should remain as they were, for the proposed alteration would entirely do away with that confiding innocence that lambs now had, in being led to the slaughter, and which was one of their chief charms. But you need not be alarmed, Mr. Twitcher, 'THE COMING MAN' may come it as strong as he pleases; but in *this* generation, upon this *one* point of keeping the fetters upon women, they are all (with the exception of that very small minority of moral, Christian, and good men, who, having no evil courses to pursue, or no inclination to tyranny, have no interest in perpetuating the facilities, and immunities now insured to them for both—with these rare exceptions then) I repeat, they are all unanimous in riveting the fetters of woman, be their politics or creeds wide as the poles asunder. In *this*, at least, sure as the antistrophe always answers the strophe, and the epodes each other in a Pindaric ode, so will they always respond in unison, when this one chord is touched, however skilfully, or ignorantly. But woe! woe! eternal woe! betide the woman who presumes to meddle with this Eleusinian mystery, the chief *μυστηρια* of which so vitally concerns them, for though the magnates of the press will be sure to pass over her delinquencies in contemptuous silence, *deeds* not *words*, being their motto where a woman is to be crushed; yet the Tritons of the minnow provincial press will not fail to scavenger's daughter and thumb-screw her as 'The Furious Fair,' or some equally namby-pamby vituperative, appropriate to female inanity."

"The worst of it is," said Sir Gregory, "that until women are both legislated for, and protected as human beings, the race of men cannot be improved, and we shall continue to have the same '*ornaments*' to public life and disgraces to humanity that we have now—cant, and clap-trap, supplying the place of conscience and consistency. Jews may be emancipated, or corn-laws even repealed; but, like the Eleusinian mysteries to which you just now alluded, they will take care the Ceres share of them, the *αχθια* shall still be the portion of women. But in spite of all this, their day of redress *must* come."

"You seem to really believe, with Buffon, then, *que les races se feminesent*, and that women do, hereditarily and morally, affect the characters of men," said Mr. Twitcher, adding—with his little cackling laugh, as with a tweezerish jerk he tried to clutch one of

the "few and far between" bristles, upon which he had bestowed the title, by courtesy, of "moustaches"—"well, I don't know what to say to *that*, for it is impossible for any one to be a greater negative than my mother; and indeed so is my father—so I'm sure I don't know what *I* can be? He! he! he!"

"Why, an affirmative, of course," suggested Sir Gregory, "as that is the proverbial result of two negatives."

But Mr. Twitcher, either not taking, or not liking the jest, passed it entirely over, and said—

"Oh! but don't you think *we*"—meaning the legislature—"are doing a great deal for women just now?"

"I cannot say that I do. All I daily see is, that the laws of the land, and the laws of English society, are both so generally kind that they allow any martyrs they may make, to suffer and writhe under those sufferings as much as they please, provided they do *not murmur*; for it is the *complaint* that is deemed unlawful, and *contra bones mores*, at least in women; for if a *man*, be he only a chimney-sweep, is oppressed, it is quite lawful for *him* to resist to the death, and to be armed to the teeth in his own defence. But despite all this, and strange as it may sound to the ears of the orthodox, stuffed as they are with those wool-gatherings of ages—hereditary prejudices—I feel convinced that Time, the sire, and Nature, the mother, of all great changes, are about to have another of their luminous progeny registered on the world's archives, even that of JUSTICE FOR WOMEN. Nay, my good Sir, you need not look so surprised. Rather take up your history book, turn over its tenebrous pages, and, amid the darkest, you will suddenly find vivid and striking illuminations—sometimes, alas! red with blood, but always followed by purer rays of golden light; and then you will know that even this day *must* also dawn. "Oh, king, live for ever!" was the impious eastern salutation. Nevertheless, where Belshazzar revelled, and Solomon ruled, silence *now* reigns, and the wild ass grazes. In like manner, the sway, and the fame, of the Cæsars, once filled the world, as one universal atmosphere; yet Imperial Rome is now no more. And, to come nearer to our own times, Charles the First lost his head by all the laws he had left the people; and Cromwell usurped his sovereign power by the same charter. France, like an infuriated war-horse, snorted, plunged, and struggled neck-deep in blood out of the trammels, trappings, and fettering housings of the *ancien régime*. In the Inquisitorial dungeons of Venice and Genoa, where erst oppressed humanity groaned out its last mortal agonies, Commerce now stows away her plenteous stores; and, though last, not least, Catholic Emancipation, the great political chimera of centuries, is now an achieved *fact*, enrolled among the laws of the land. But, oh! what dreadful heresies preceded it. What a knocking down of orthodox, autocratic and hereditary powers, like nine-pins; and *that*, not by an oligarchy of bold barons, but by a mobocracy of

boors and menial dependents; for there came a culminating epoch, as there ever *must do* before all monstrous chronic injustices can be shuffled off, and at that daring and terrible crisis, even the omnipotent Berestords were defeated by plebeian resolution at Waterford, as were the aristocratic Jocelyns at Louth. Nay, more terrible than all, Lord Waterford's huntsman (the hound!) actually dared to vote against him; but still, true at least to his avocation, he was in at the death; for he was called to the bedside of his departing master to receive his dying reproaches for such unparalleled, not to say sacrilegious rebellion, as that of a *dependant* and a menial presuming to vote against a marquis and a master. Yet nevertheless, the serf, the slave, had somehow or other got a glimmering that God and his own soul were to be obeyed, even before a lord and master. And so it will *at length* be with women, who have too long perilled *their* souls by being of the temporizing policy of Phœbus, in Dryden's *Amphitryon*, and thinking that—

'Since arbitrary power *will* hear no reason,
'Tis wisdom to be silent.'

However, the time is fast approaching when this rule will be infringed; indeed, it is virtually so at present. 'It is a great pity,' says Mr. Russell, *The Times* correspondent, in one of his admirable letters from the Crimea—'It is a great pity that it is not permitted us to hate the Turks in Turkey; certainly it is done to a vast extent without permission in the British army.' It is also a great pity that it is not permitted to wives to hate *their* Turks out of Turkey; nevertheless, it is done to a vast extent *without* permission among *British females*. And no wonder; for tyranny is at once the usurper and the assassin of power; but unfortunately, notwithstanding the pother we keep up about liberty and justice (?), we have in reality neither the one nor the other; nor could we have, where Mammon and might are paramount; for in moral England all justice, truth, falsehood, right, wrong, aggression, and oppression resolve themselves into the national

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that great and mighty rallying point and symbol compared to which, the old Roman S. P. Q. R. is a sort of farthing rushlight myth. Thanks indeed to Publicity, that only *real* reformer and purifier, we have now no Judge Jefferys on the English bench; but believe me, in '*the sacred privacy of social life*'—that catholic sanctuary for the protection and refuge of *every* vice—despite all our cant about progression, we have plenty of small change for him, who are ever unsuspectingly pulling the strings of the world's Fantoccini, and getting the Royal Assent to many as pre-concerted and equally murderous, though less sanguinary, pieces of injustice, as that which has come down to us in a certain little historical record in the systematically planned destruction of an unfortunate woman,

whose sole crime was having been remotely connected with the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth."

"Oh!" broke in Mr. Twitcher, "look what an uproar there was in London last year, when Lord R——, after a few months' marriage, deserted his wife, and went off with his French mistress, leaving a note on his wife's toilet to say he had never loved any one but this French woman, but hoped his wife would get well over her confinement. So you see, society did take the wife's part, then."

"No thanks to society, Sir, but to Lady R——'s relations not being quite fools, and to my Lord R——'s folly in not being content with committing adultery, but he must go and not only own it, but own it to his wife! and thus give her the redress of public sympathy—an asinine proceeding unheard of in these clever times, and in the all-privileged saturnalia of fashionable life, and which proved Lord R—— to be a mere mediocre tyro in profligacy. Had he been a genius, like that loathsome brute, Sir Janus Allpuff, for instance, he would better have understood the proper dare-all manner of riding the Satanic steeple-chase of crime, and so have avoided getting that awkward tumble into the mire of the odium of public opinion; for with your 'genius'—from his first vault into the saddle of the black steed the Prince of Darkness sends him for the race of TIME, *his* apostrophe to it is, 'Evil, be thou my good;' and as he never deserts it, it never deserts him, but carries him high and dry over the quagmires and precipices, into which poor conscience-laden mortals fall. I think it is Addison who says, speaking of Socrates's catechetical method of arguing, and Aristotle's changing this mode of attack, by inventing a variety of little weapons called syllogisms, that after the European Universities, between the two, found that there was no end to wrangling in this way—to mend the matter (?) they invented the *argumentum baculinum*, for which we have no nearer definition than club law; so that when they were not able to refute their antagonist they knocked him down. It was their method, in these polemical debates, first to discharge their syllogisms, and then betake themselves to their clubs; and, '*posing the syllogisms thus*,' as Sir Janus Allpuff would say, this is *verbatim ad literatim* the only law for wives in moral England. And the clever Sir Janus, being equally addicted to syllogisms and clubs, adopts precisely the same plan as these academical wranglers, first discharging his syllogisms at the public (in print), and then betaking himself to his clubs, or agricultural meetings, mechanics' institutes, testimonial committees, or any other of our solemn national humbugs, where tinkling cymbals and sounding brass drown the voice of Truth, call she never so loudly for retributive justice. No wonder, then that in our highly moral and religious country, where only Royal ears are allowed to hear music on the Sabbath, that such trifles as a man's violating every human and divine law in his own family, and being guilty of every meanness

every falsehood and every vice that can disgrace human nature, should be over-looked in consideration of the fine sentiments he writes and utters—or rather splutters—in public, or that the *guilt* of literature should set forth its ubiquitous puffery, and append to every railway volume of that brothel philosophy, and bundle of barefaced plagiaries, which Sir Janus calls his works, that '*they abound in illustrations that teach benevolence (?) to the rich, and courage to the poor; they glow with the love of freedom (no doubt, for himself, and his blasphemous hypocrisy); they speak a sympathy with all high aspirations, and all manly struggles*'!! Physically destroying one child—morally destroying another—kicking his wretched victim of a wife a month before her first child was born till she was nearly dead—turning that poor little martyr out of his house the moment she was born, as he ultimately did, to die—springing, in one of his rabid furies, upon his wife, and making his hideous horse-teeth meet in her cheek till the blood streamed down her, and ultimately turning her and her children out of their home to make way for one of his infamous mistresses—are, no doubt, among these high aspirations *and manly struggles*! and cannot of course be considered as the least infringement either on humanity or morality; as in one of his books a whole chapter is devoted to a little blasphemous twaddle, on 'the depth and purity of a father's love for his first-born!' and as not having even the courage of his loathsome vices, he never is to be caught doing *his own dirty work*, but employs some of his kept mistresses to write anonymous defamatory letters to periodicals against his wife, and *soi disant reviewers (?)* to write abusive ones to her. Truly the force of villany and of humbug can no further go, and the *only* hypocrisy now left for the *honorable* baronet to enact will be, to join the crusade against those brutal husbands who, in *low* life, mutilate their wretched legal victims, and empty their houses to fill the police-reports. And now that this said crusade is gaining ground I have no doubt that he will do so; for 'it is a noticeable thing,' as Mr. Thomas Carlyle would say, that this 'great' man never takes the *initiative* in any new movement, social or political. But as poor Brummell used to wait till the streets were aired before *he* ventured out, so Sir Janus Allpuff always takes the precaution to wait till each succeeding novelty is patented by popularity before he lends it his support; but *then*, who so loud in the hue-and-cry as he, or so prompt to incorporate himself with a *triumphant* cause, or nominal charity, and to drape himself in that most graceful of all mantles, and cover for all sin—*Success*? Therefore, however outrageous such a man's *private* acts may be, a moral and discerning public, having nothing, of course, to do with *them*, when once this glittering mantle descends upon him, who can question the *mens sano in corpo sano*? Asop tells us that men are furnished with two wallets—one hanging before, and the other behind—and that they put their neighbours' follies and vices into that which hangs before, and hide their own

in that which is more out of sight. But truly in England we have improved upon this apologue by the *cordon sanitaire* we have drawn between public and private life, as if they were two different hemispheres that could *not* be inhabited by the same individual, and so bundle all the dark ugly realities into the posterior wallet, while the foremost one is broidered in the most glittering tinsels, and filled with shreds and patches of all the rainbow hues in vogue, like those mediæval *aumonieres* worn by the foremost hero in all popular pageants, who cried 'Nœl! Nœl!' and in virtue of their gaudy pretensions levied contributions upon all whom they met. Oh, world! world! wilt thou never earn any other motto than—*CRUX ET VANITAS?*"

"Well, certainly," cackled Mr. Twitcher, as he helped himself to a fifth brandied green-gage, and at the same time felt that his concentrated egotism was no match for the numerous and sledge-hammer facts Sir Gregory always brought to bear upon an argument; "we must allow, I'm afraid, that everything is politics and public life in England; and as you are a Whig, of course I must not attempt to reason with you on that ground, Sir Gregory. He! he! he!"

"Whatever you do, pray don't calumniate me by calling me a Whig," rejoined Sir Gregory, "or any other of those hollow-sounding brass names, for I am neither Whig, Tory, Peelite, Protectionist, nor any other of those political sign-posts that point the way they never go. No, thank God, I stand aloof, amid a large majority of HONEST MEN, during this theocratic millenium, in which England will *not* take the initiative; for what great or real, that is, universal amelioration, *can* spring from a legislature composed of little, paltry, personal individual interests, the whole united only forming one great heathen arena of

TRY-TO-GET-ON-A-TIVE-NESS?

In corruption, there is propagation too, but it is *only* corruption that it does, or *can* propagate; and as long as the *names* of Whig and Tory exist, and are represented by the *things*, 'MY OWN INTEREST' 'AND YOURS,' which constitute the sole *real* difference between this dual oligarchy which is always playing at 'pull devil, pull baker,' with the country, depend upon it that every man with a conscience will do as Cato did, when Rome was split into two factions between Pompey and Cæsar—declare himself against *both*. It is true that in the present day, as a *show* of enlightenment, the favourite game appears to be playing at bowls with all the orthodox prejudices of centuries, not only in the State, but also with its incompatible excrescence, the Church, and bowling them down as fast as possible one after the other. In a well-written and agreeable book which recently appeared, called 'BLENHAM, OR WHAT CAME OF TROUBLING THE WATERS'—the express purpose of it being to advocate religious toleration, and dealing a mortal blow at the flagrant injustice of the compulsory Church-

rate system which extorts money from Dissenters to support a creed from which they have separated themselves—a Mrs. Hollis, one of the *dramatis personæ*, says,—‘Suppose, for instance, a law could be passed to authorize the taking away from me, by force, my children, and sending them nobody knows whither; would you have me submit patiently, and say it is the will of God? Should I not, on the contrary, be justified in resisting such a law in any way I judged best?’ Heaven bless the worthy woman in her happy ignorance, not to know that such an iniquitous law among many others equally so is passed, and has been always the law of the land in moral England, and that any, and every profligate brute of a husband (in *high life*, for in low there is a great deal of *verbal* chivalry about women, and not allowing the strong to oppress the weak), yes, any and every profligate, who does not care the whiff of a cigar for his children’s souls or bodies, has free and irresponsible power, if he is only villain enough to avail himself of it, to do whatever he pleases with them. When Mr. Ward, the Mormon, was remonstrated with by one of his wives upon the wholesale murders of the deserters from the Salt Lake to California, he coolly replied—‘*So long as the majority were in favour of such doings, the minority must either keep silent or share the same fate.*’ And so it is in this, our land of cant; no one should dare to cast a stone into the cold, fetid, stagnant pool of our social conventionality, without being fully prepared to go to the stake which they have risked. But let us hope that the day is fast approaching when the majority will *not* be satisfied with such doings—when good men who profit nothing by such barbaric laws, in order not only to *prove* that they are ‘good men and true,’ but also from *esprit de corps* to shew that they *are* the majority, will be the first to clamour for a repeal of those remaining brands of the dark ages; but till then the Anglo-Saxons must be content to pass their time in giving Shakespear the lie—as he asserted that there was nothing in a name, whereas all England answers there is everything in a name, and nothing without it: as one among many proofs of which, witness the pious horror of Britons, at savage or Mormon polygamy; but *ad libitum* adultery and seduction never shocks them in the least; oh, dear no!—such little trifles only forming a part of *The Adventures of a Gentleman.*”

While Sir Gregory was still speaking, a boy, in the livery of the Electric Telegraph Office, rode past the window at full gallop, and gave a loud ring at the door. Mrs. Penrhyn, who, from where she was sitting, had caught sight of him, turned as pale as death, and an involuntary scream escaped her as she fell back in her chair, and would have fallen to the ground, had not Mr. Lethbridge hastily risen and gone to her assistance on one side, and Miss Charity, with her eau-de-Luce, on the other. The fact was, that, living in constant terror of some fatal tidings of Harcourt, in the feverish agony of her anxiety she forgot there was any one else in

the house to receive a telegraphic despatch beside herself. When Gifford made his appearance with it, every eye tried to look over the salver at the direction, before he had time to close the door after him.

"For me?" asked Sir Gregory, looking, in spite of himself, a little nervous.

"No, Sir Gregory, it's for Mr. Lethbridge. They had taken it to his house and were sent on here," said he, handing it to him.

While he still supported Mary Penrhyn with one arm, he opened the letter with his disengaged left hand. As he read it, all eyes were fixed upon him, and, at his first glance at its contents, a vivid flush suffused his face, which the next moment became as pale as the snowy ends of his own neckerchief.

"No bad news, I hope?" said Sir Gregory, eagerly.

"Oh, dear no; I suppose it is what would be called quite the contrary," replied he, with an open and quiet expression of countenance as he put the letter into his pocket; "I'll tell you all about it by and bye;" and then, pouring some iced water into a tumbler, he dipped his fingers into it, and sprinkled the face of his fainting burden till she revived, and, opening her eyes, met his anxiously bending over her; he gently pressed her hand and said, "Your son is safe, the despatch was for me."

At this she immediately roused herself and apologized for the trouble she had given—became as red as she had just been the reverse, as if her fainting had let the whole world (including Mr. Twitcher) into the secret of how matters stood between her and Mr. Lethbridge.

"My dear Mrs. Pemble," said Sir Gregory, "I think you had better go in the car for the children."

"No thank you, Sir Gregory, it is so very fine that I prefer walking; and I'm sure the air will do me good; so if you will kindly order the covered car to go at nine to Mrs. Lewyn's to bring them home——"

"Perhaps Mrs. Pemble will allow me to have the pleasure of escorting her, as I am always glad to have an opportunity of seeing Mrs. Lewyn," said Mr. Lethbridge, more with the air of a young Jesuit than of a young clergyman; while she, with equal candour, bowed ceremoniously as she thanked him, and said he was very good, but that she feared it would be taking him away too soon from his wine.

"Oh, not in the least."

So, while she went out at one door to go up stairs and equip herself for the walk, he disappeared through another into the hall for his hat. Luckily, Mr. Twitcher made no offers, so got no refusals, for, thanks to what he called "the practical phase of his character," he any day preferred green-gages to governesses, and therefore, as Mr. Lethbridge closed the door in pursuit of one of the latter, Mr. Twitcher helped himself to another of the former, making the sixth,

but not last, which he had honored with his notice, in this instance not a fruitless one, as dinner was the only time Mr. Twitcher felt that he got his deserts, and was VERY SUCCESSFUL.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CHAPTER OF CONFESSIONS; IN WHICH IT ALSO APPEARS HOW THE REVEREND JABEZ JOWL ELUCIDATES HIS TEXT; AND HOW TAFFY LLOYD JOINS THE BAPTISTS.

As a reader for the time being stands always in the position of an author's Father-Confessor, the culprit author is in duty bound to have no reservations or concealments from him; for which reason we are now bound to confess that, upon emerging from the lodge gates of Baron's Court, and finding themselves in the high road, Mary Penrhyn and Horace Lethbridge, instead of continuing their way straight along it, which was by far the nearest route to Pen-y-coed, they turned up a set of little bye round-about, unfrequented lanes, even those in which they had met on the night of the lecture in the school house, just eleven months before; and this they seemed to do by tacit consent, and without uttering a word; but on entering these lanes, or rather on reaching the one where he had on that occasion sprang out of the hedge, Mr. Lethbridge stopped, and pressing the little hand that was leaning on his arm more closely to his heart, he looked into her face, and said—

“Do you remember, Mary?”

“Ah! what a lovely night that was,” said she; “your words had filled me full of eternal hope, and it was not till I came out into the clear cold air, that all my earthly fears for Harcourt began to return thick and fast upon me; and then I looked upwards, and as my eyes wandered amid the myriads of bright worlds above, my spirit began to ride at anchor amongst them, as I reflected that even if it were God's will to sever my last earthly tie, still—

—‘To the watchful eye and ear,
All earth with sights and sounds is rife,
That speak the “Master's” coming near,
And all the brevity of life.
The opening grave, the passing bell,
Of our own speedy funeral tell;
And every ache and pain,
That strike from life's calendar a notch,
Are omens of our sure decay;
Heralds of mercy sent to say—
(Nor let them say in vain)
— WATCH!’”

"And amid all those wanderings in heaven and earth, not one thought of me at *that* time, Mary?"

"Yes," said she, colouring to her very temples, "I wished, among this tangled web of present cares and fears, and on into the glorious halo of future certainty, that *you* had been my son, for I thought how proud——"

She hesitated a moment. And he said, reproachfully—

"*Only* proud, not fond of me, Mary?"

"That you know," she rejoined, blushing even more deeply than before—"is a pride inseparable from the deepest, perhaps, the only really eternal love."

He caught her to his heart; and, with one long, deep kiss, said—

"Mary! *my* Mary! tell me more—tell me *all* you thought on that night."

"I then thought that if you *were* my son—though you would not, like my poor Harcourt, be exposed to death in ten thousand bleeding mutilated forms—that still those pale looks and that hollow cough of yours would have made me very wretched; and then—and then—I thought that you loved May, and that this love which you feared to encourage, it was, which was driving health from your cheek and mining your existence; and I would have given the world to have told you, could I have done so without compromising her, that nothing Sir Gregory would have liked better, than that she should have been your wife; for this he once owned to me."

"You were right, Mary, as to the love that I feared to encourage sapping my existence, but wrong as to its object; for, from the first moment I saw you, it was *you* I loved. Your glorious beauty, in the first instance, stormed my heart as it were by admiration; but your still more glorious nature as I came to know you—so gentle in its strength, and so genial in its gentleness—so single in its simplicity, yet so shrewd in its sequences—its abnegation of self, and its devotion to others—led not only my every feeling, but my judgment, captive; and all in rendering you the unfeigned homage which even the severest scrutiny, and the nicest criticism could not withhold from you, I felt that the hard, unspiritual, disenchanting struggles of poverty were not exactly the offerings to bring to such a shrine. Dryden has happily designated your sex 'the fine porcelain of human nature;' and what business, I asked myself, even were I *sure* of not having my presumption punished with the scornful rejection it deserves—what business have I to transfer one of the very rarest specimens of this fine porcelain to the incongruous *entourage* of the delf and *willow* patterns of a village curate's *ménage*; and so, discretion being most assuredly the wisest part of valour, where one's heart and soul are in danger, even more than where only one's limbs are, I kept away from Baron's Court. But when the *Confessions of the Village Curate* brought in a sufficient earnest of the future to allow of my

trusting to it, I could no longer resist playing that bold game which Fortune is proverbially said to favour; and ascertaining if, without a single worldly advantage to offer you, you *could* love me sufficiently to merge your fate in mine—You know the rest. But—but—still your only having wished that I was your son, shows that you did not love me, Mary, as I would be loved, at least by you."

"On the contrary," murmured she, looking timidly, yet earnestly into his face, with an expression of love, so deep, so confiding, so sincere, that no mere words could ever have told half the eventful history it contained, "I think it shews that *even* when I thought you loved May, and never could have dreamt that you bestowed a second thought, much less one of affection, upon an old woman like me, there was an unsuspected latent folly stirring in my heart which set it upon seeking legitimate excuses to love you; and, not being able to find the justification it sought, it even invented an imaginary relationship,—which—which—would have converted a folly into a duty."

"Mary!" cried he, passionately pressing her to his heart, "I am a perjured apostate, for I told you I loved you from the first moment I saw you. It was false, I never loved you till *now*; but now it is with an eternity of devotion that never could have been created; it *must* always have existed, and, having done so, can have no end." "But," added he, releasing her from his embrace and again replacing her arm within his, as they walked on, "*self* being satisfied, and having gained what is, to me, the whole world, I have now time to think of others; so tell me, how came Sir Gregory to tell you that he would have no objection to May Egerton's marrying me; or rather, how came he and you to speak on such a subject at all?"

"Well," said she with a slight hesitation, and amid many renewed blushes, "I suppose I must have very soon begun adopting you as my son, and so I acted precisely as I should have done had my poor Harcourt, with his noble, loveable nature, handsome person, and empty purse, been thrown into close and constant communication with such a beautiful and attractive girl as May. I told him that I thought such a state of things was not only highly imprudent, but cruel in the extreme to both of you—whereupon he said, that he thought *you* looked upon May as a mere child, and had no idea of her in any other light. I then suggested that *she* might love you, and, therefore, the same objections existed against his giving her so dangerous a preceptor. He said he would not, indeed, for worlds have her happiness risked or wrecked if you did not care for her; but that if you did, nothing would give him greater pleasure than such a marriage, as, even in a worldly point of view, it would be by no means so imprudent a one as I seemed to think, as you had some distant relation—I forget the name—Lord Somebody, to whose title and fortunes you

were heir-presumptive; and though, like most rich relations, he, with imperturbable philosophy, left you to starve now, as far as he was concerned, yet that he could not, in the natural course of things, prevent your succeeding to his title and estates, but as he was barely sixty, you might serve a long apprenticeship to privation first. And this reminds me, Horace, that although when you so generously offered to make poor me—a destitute governess—the sharer of your fortunes, you never even alluded to this contingency, which, as another proof of the independence and disinterestedness of your nature, gave me the superfluous aid of an additional excuse for my folly; yet, do you know, this probability in itself, instead of being an inducement and an advantage to me, is rather a drawback—not indeed so much the idea of your, at any time, being the possessor of a wealth, which no one would make a better use of—for not only am I well aware that no great good either to ourselves or to our fellow-creatures can be achieved *without* money—but having had a pretty good experience of the nipping, withering influences of all the weary, work-a-day, up-hill, toiling cares of poverty—that real Valley of the Shadow of Death, wherein Heaven's two spies, Hope and Faith, find it so difficult to reveal their Eschol pledges of the land of promise, I shudder at the bare idea, and recoil still more from the reality of seeing anything I love exposed to them; but for many reasons—all perhaps one more selfish than another—I would far rather your way of life remained in its present quiet sphere—first, because from my experience of it I have the most insurmountable distaste, and the most sovereign contempt for the rampant vice, the radical hollowness, the eternal swamping of all principle in the spring-tides of expediency which constitute the chief schedules in that great charter of exemption from all human responsibilities and all divine laws, which our *haute volée* have granted to themselves, and which, having been framed in corruption, is varnished over with a little verbal orthodoxy, and next—

“What next?” asked he, finding that she paused—

“Why, nothing but a touch of female vanity, not worth perhaps giving you the triumph of knowing,” laughed she.

“Nay now, I insist upon knowing it—as it will, as you truly say, be such a triumph to my masculine superiority (ahem!) to find a single flaw, however slight, in your terribly humiliating perfection.”

“No, Sir, since you take to irony and to amusing yourself at my expense, you shall *not* know it, but instead, I will tell you something that will effectually lower *your* vanity; which, like the intellectual superiority of your sex, *without exception*, I acknowledge to be so much greater than ours. Know, then, that having told you what *were* my fears about dear May, I think it also right to tell you that, no longer being able to bear a doubt which I now find was more completely torturing to me than I then even suspected, the other day I screwed my courage to the sticking point

and asked her the coarse and point-blank question, whether *she* cared for you; and she answered with the first joyous laugh I have heard from her for many a long month, 'What an idea!' and followed it up with an emphatic 'No!' which was an immense relief to me."

"What an idea, indeed!" echoed he; "a most absurd one! for May is such a perfect child."

"Oh! if that were the *only* impossibility, 'out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee,' for I don't see anything more absurd, while it is certainly less preposterous, in a man's being in love with a girl young enough to be his daughter, than in his being guilty of that folly with a woman old enough to be his mother."

"And out of thine own mouth will I also condemn thee,—for May is sixteen, and I am eight-and-twenty, therefore, I could not well have had the honor of being her father at the *pre-mature* age of twelve; and as Sir Gregory told me you really were nine-and-thirty, though no one, to look at you, would give you credit for that age within twelve years, yet as even in *reality* you could not well have had the satisfaction of being my mother at eleven years old, I must beg, that in future, as *my wife*, you will not indulge in such tremendous exaggerations, amounting to positive, I won't say *what!* And so, having drawn up your condemnation—for you know *rien n'est brutal comme les chiffres rien n'est entêté comme les faits!*—in order to make this condemnation both valid and irrevocable, I must seal it," added he, kissing her. "And now, what way the '*and next*,' that you stopped at, for I *must* and *will* know; and therefore shall stay here all night till you tell me."

"That will be only hastening the event," smiled she, "through grief at such terrible obstinacy—for the '*and next*' that I was then thinking of was, that the crows'-feet which *must* come very soon, if indeed they are not already come, would be much better hidden under the sheltering coif of a curate's wife than under the blaze of a coronet."

"You never were more mistaken; for even supposing the evidence of the transit of a whole rookery—far more numerous than the legions composing the flight of the Israelites out of Egypt, *were* to leave their foot-prints at the corner of either eye, yet, gilded by the refracted rays of a few glittering strawberry-leaves, the whole world would think, or at least swear, that the said crows'-feet were far more beautiful than the most bewildering dimples that could possibly lurk beneath the cap of a curate's wife. And, in the next place, the crows, having a three or four hundred years' lease of their lives, out of gratitude to Time for the grant, always walk in *his* steps; and as he seems to have turned *purposely* out of his way to avoid you, pray do not be so mean as to insist upon running after him and seizing him *volens volens*; though as there is no chance of your being able to do this, the court rules, that the crows'-feet are inadmissible as evidence."

As he said this, they came out into another high-road, a parallel one to that which they had quitted, and which led both down to Mr. Jowl's church and to Mrs. Lewyn's house; and they had scarcely turned into this road before they saw that reverend gentleman himself, a little in advance of them, but in such a tottering state that, although he was not in the act of solemnizing a marriage, he was "*assisted*" by Taffy Lloyd on the one side, and Gabriel Griffeths on the other; who both had great difficulty in forcibly preserving Mr. Jowl's equilibrium for him.

"Good heavens! Mr. Jowl appears to be in a fit," said Mr. Lethbridge; "stay here, Mary, one minute, and I'll go and help them to get him into the vicarage, which is not above a hundred yards farther on."

"No, no, dear; pray, don't go," said she, retaining his arm with both her hands, so as to prevent his proceeding; "don't you see what sort of a fit it is?"

"For shame, Mary."

But Mr. Jowl, breaking from the friendly restraint of one of his supporters, at this moment struck out his arm, and, apparently mistaking poor Taffy's back for a pulpit, began thumping on it with a degree of vengeance, which *only* pulpit cushions can or do endure without reproach or retaliation; and, while indulging in these gymnastics, he hiccuped out—

"Be yet not drunk with *woine*, but filled with the *spirit*;" and then with an ineffectual effort at a sonorous *ahem*—such as he was wont to arouse his congregation with, which, however, broke off into the splinters of another hiccup—he roared out—

"And what says *Mosses*?"

"Well, Sir," replied Gabriel Griffeths, to whom this query seemed to be more especially addressed, "I'm sure I don't know what he *would* say, if so be as he was to catch sight of you in this state."

"Oh! ye of *lettle* faith; I tell ye such doings are an *ab-bumination* to the LORD—military music on the Sabbath, centurian *sensuolity*, *woine*, and wickedness, instead of being filled with the *spirit*, as *Mosses* and the Prophets were, and as I am now. Do you *moind* me, Gabriel Griffeth, thou *scroibe*, and thou Taffy Lloyd, pharisee that thou art, do ye heed how the *spirit* abounds in me?"

"Indeed, Sir, I'm thinking it's abounding rather too much in you to-night; and the sooner you get home the better, lest any of the Philistines, as you call them, should——"

But here a servant appeared from the Vicarage, and, lending the aid of his powerful arm, at once released and relieved the writing-master from his arduous task. And upon being towed to his own gate, and told where he was, Mr. Jowl converted himself into a fabulous monster by incorporating Noah and the ark into his own person, and announcing that he—that is, they—had arrived at

Mount Ararat; and asking Gabriel if he knew what Noah did when he got out of the ark?

"Oh, yes, Sir; but you are now only going into it; so it's a pity you should have done it at the wrong time."

"How disgraceful!" sighed Mr. Lethbridge. "Let us wait here till he has got into the house; for I would not give him the humiliation of knowing that I had seen him in such a state."

A few minutes after, Taffy Lloyd passed them on his way home, and, taking it for granted they had witnessed the scene, as indeed they had, he said, with a laugh to Mr. Lethbridge, as he touched his hat—

"Well I can't say I be sorry, Sir, as you've seen the way as Parson Jowl is filled with the sperit. This being Wednesday, that was the '*dential tew*' as he give us this aternoon, of 'Be ye not drunk with wine, but filled with the sperit;' and so, to carry it out like, he goes and calls on the gent down yander what praches to the West-lions (Wesleyans);—noa, I don't mean that neither, I makes a mistake—I should say on that ere Baptist *pracher*, Muster Doubleface Dipdolt, who had a lot of what he calls '*his lambs*' with him, but I calls 'em his water-wagtails. There were a matter of four or five on 'em with Judas Iscariot Jones, the red-haired flannel-factor, and his sister Jezebel Price; they as that Sir Janus Allpuff got, that 'ere Barnes, the literairy gent and the street-walker as was with him, to '*have* so infamous to his wife; for Judas Iscariot Jones you see, Sir, don't bely his name, and would sell his GOD, let alone a lodger, for money; and as for that flaunting hussy, Jezebel Price, his sister, its *unpossible* to tell whether there's most fibs or finery goes to the putting on her together. Well, Sir, when they was all assembled at Muster Dipdolt's, and had howled a hymn, in comes the punch-bowl, with wine and all, and cold *mate*. I was a training up the vine the way it should go, round the parlour window, and so I seen it and *heard* it all. Muster Dipdolt, he axes Parson Jowl to *fine* them in a loving cup; but Muster Jowl, he puts up his hands and says, 'No wine, Mr. Dipdolt; I've just been praching against the indulgence in that treacherous liquor; you know the *tex*,' "Be ye not drunk with wine." 'But on the other hand, Muster Jowl,' says Dipdolt, '*ye know we are commanded to be filled with the sperit;*' and with that he ladies out a tumbler of punch, and hands it to Parson Jowl, who makes no further objections, only saying summut about *Mosses*, as he calls him, striking the rock, and the living waters gushing forth, and with that he strikes the *tay-spoon* *agin* the side of the tumbler, and *swallows* the punch as if it had been only pure water, sure enough. He! he! he!"

"Taffy, it was very wrong of you to stand looking and listening to what was going on in Mr. Dipdolt's parlor; and that was by no means training *your own* vine in the way it should go; and after all, Mr. Jowl no doubt only took the punch out of civility to Mr.

Dipdolt, whose guest he was at the time; and it's having such an effect on him is much to his credit, and it shows how little he is in the habit of taking anything of the kind."

"That's very good of you, Mr. Lethbridge, Sir, to give it that turn, for I'm sure you are the last man in the world as Parson Jowl *deserves* should give him a helping hand, drunk, or sober; but it *warn't* that one glass of punch that upset him, Sir; though I dare say it *was* strong enough to knock a better man down. No, no; he took *that* us to taste how he liked it, and then another *because* he liked how he tasted it; and then *follored* suit with the second 'un, Sir, and no mistake, and——"

"Come, come, Taffy; if you would take a little of the spirit of charity, you would not be so extreme to mark what others do amiss; and to show you that others can talk as well as you, I heard a report the other day about yourself, which grieved me very much."

"About me, Sir? the Lord be good to us, as I hope to be saved, I have not touched a glass of *spirits* the last ten years come Martinmas."

"The report I allude to was not about spirits, but about water, Taffy."

"No, nor *spirits* and water neither! I'll be upon oath, Mr. Lethbridge, Sir," protested Taffy, indignantly.

"You mistake my meaning. I alluded to a report of your having yourself joined the Baptists."

"Lord love ye, Sir; what *will* they say next?" rejoined Taffy, with a comical smile, as he leisurely scratched his head, and pushed his white-felt wide-awake more over his eyes; "I'll tell you how that *war*, Sir: first of all, afore you '*stablished* the Baron's Court Sunday Evenings' Cricket Club, there wasn't never no sort of pleasure like for the poor, on the only day as we've got a spare hour; so I confess as I used, Sir, occasionally look in to the different Methody chapels, which I assure you is as good as a play! And besides, I *argeed* in this way:—says I, Taffy Lloyd, you'll have to go *rayther* further nor your legs could carry you afore you could hear *worse* praching nor Mr. Jowl's; and you *may*, even at one of them 'ere Methody spiritual marine-stores, chance to pick up a few rags of better stuff, and a bottle that is not a vial of wrath; and moreover, Mr. Lethbridge, Sir, (put me right if I am wrong,) I take it that a mouthful of prayers, like a mouthful of *wittuls*, never does a poor man any harm, let him pick it up where he will, for *reg'lar* prayers, like *reg'lar* meals, is often out of his power. Well, Sir, about a month agone, I hears of the great Baptist-dipping, as was to come off on the Dee; so I thought it would be a nice *de-varshun* like for me and my old ooman to go to it. *Mester* Jenkins, Sir Gregory's steward, he lends us a nice fat mule out of the paddock, and a pillion, and Tamer and I sets out as *gran* as any Duke and Duchess, with as much bread and cheese as a King or

a Quene could eat, and we aways to the dippings. But Lor'! when we gits there you never see such a sight in all your born days. There war a lot of men and women—old and young—fat and lean—all in long white night gowns, as if they was *raelly* and truly agoing to *slope* in the bead of the river; and there was Muster Dipdolt, assisted, as they calls it, by Brother Sousem, and Brother Damper, and Brother Splasher, and a lot more on 'em; and they takes these great hulking *fellers*, and *ro-bustshus* females in the long night-gowns, and they makes no more ado of sousing on 'em down over head and ears into the river than a ooman would of bathing a *babby*. But the best of this raree-show was, Sir, to see with what a *wengeance*-like the 'Brothers' took the old women—neck and crop—and seemed to ram 'em down into the water, as if they'd leave 'em there for good and all; while any of the '*sisters*' as was young and pretty, they'd take 'em as gingerly as if they'd been snow figures, as if they feared a touch would break them to pieces, and they never disappeared, but you saw the white night gowns a-floating 'like water lilies a-top of the stream, and the '*brothers*' laid 'em down as gently on the grass arter as if they had been salmon trout *jist* caught. And that's the way as I *jined* the Baptists, Sir; and I aint likely to *jine* them in no other way, for, as I says to my old ooman when I'd got her up behind me again, and we was on our way home, 'Tamar Lloyd,' says I, 'I've seen many a litter of poor blind puppies and kittens *drownded* in the river, but it's the *fast* time as ever I see such a lot of asses, with their eyes open, *throw'd* into it.'

"True for you, Taffy Lloyd,' says she; 'and whatever do they do with their rheumatics? And did you see poor old Solomon Pan, how his teeth chattered, and how every limb shivered when Muster Dipdolt flumped him down upon the grass arter he war dipped?'

"Aye, aye, Tamar Lloyd,' says I; 'poor old Solomon, he war a *dripping pan* to the *bretheren*, and no mistake.' And my missus, she laughed, Sir, till I thought she might as well have been drownded as choked; and she said she never should call Solomon Pan anything but Muster Dipdolt's dripping-pan as long as she lived. And so you see, Sir, the foundation for a report is *ginrally* some decidedly *contrairy* thing to the truth on it, as it was all along of our going a pleasuring on Sancho, Sir Gregory's fat mule, as give rise to this here 'count of my having *jined* the Baptists.'

"Well, I'm very glad it was only a report, Taffy," said Mr. Lethbridge; who could not help laughing at his graphic account of the Baptist-immersions; "but now promise me, like a good fellow, that you will not go telling people, as you have just told me, about Mr. Jowl's taking the punch at Mr. Dipdolt's, and the unhappy effect it had upon him; for recollect, it is not only on Mr. Jowl, but on all his parishioners, that this accident reflects discredit."

"I'd be sorry to refuse to promise you anything as you could ax me, Sir," said Taffy, pulling his right ear so vigorously that his design seemed to be, not only to make it as red as a cherry, but also to elongate it down to his shoulder; "but I can't promise you *that* neither, for I thinks when folks is so fond of setting about lies of others, it's only a just theng that summit of the truth should sometimes get about of them; and if that truth is bad enough to do for 'em, sarve 'em right, and if so be as I was judge and jury, I wouldn't never give no other *vardict*."

"Aye, but Taffy, you are *not* either judge or jury; and your Bible has another teaching; it would be different if Mr. Jowl's misdeeds consisted in injuring, oppressing, or calumniating you personally; then, in self justification, you might be obliged to make known his misdeeds, for too much forbearance with regard to violent sins of aggression, is very like that 'consenting to a thief,' against which we are emphatically warned, by being told that he who does so is worse than the thief. But there is a wide difference between this and blazoning all our neighbours' defects and short-comings; which remembrance of our own, ought to always prevent our doing; for if we have not *their* particular sin, depend upon it, we have some other of equal weight, which in the eye of God may be worse; and even plenty of small change for their besetting sin, which we are so prone to condemn."

"Well, sartin sure, Sir,—but it's more *convarting* like, to be chastised by you, than to hear a whole bushel of *sarmonts* stuffed chuck full of *Mosses* and hell-fire, *prached* by Mr. Jowl; but I don't think, Sir, as he have any what you call besetting sin; for on the *contrairy*, he is beset with sins, and the mountain on top of 'em is hypocrisy. *However*, as he is so fond of damnation, it's to be hoped, with the blessing of God, as all hypocrites will be d—d, and as they travels by the Belzibub line, and no mistake, that they will be sent in a *fast* class curse, back to their father, the devil, and that's all the harm as I wishes 'em, Sir."

Mr. Lethbridge could not help laughing both at Taffy's theology and his *forbearance*, but, shaking his head at him, he said, as he walked on, "Oh, Taffy! Taffy! you and I must have some private conversation on these matters; so come over to me on Saturday morning between ten and eleven."

"Thank you, Sir; I'm much beholden to you, I won't fail. Your servant Ma'am; your servant, Sir."

And Taffy went his way, as they continued theirs.

"Upon my word," laughed Mary Penrhyn, "I'm very much of Taffy Lloyd's opinion, that it is a very good thing that the Hundred of Baron's Court should *see* as well as hear a few truths about the Rev. Jabez Jowl."

"I cannot allow such uncharitable words to pass your lips," said he, kissing them away. And a few minutes more brought them to Mrs. Lewyn's gate.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SHOWING THAT GOOD SINGING MAY BE HEARD EVEN IN A VILLAGE: MRS. LEWYN'S ALBUM: A COLLECTION OF PRECIOUS DAUBS, WHICH PROVE THAT IF ALL IS NOT GOLD THAT GLITTERS, NEITHER DOES GOLD ALWAYS GLITTER.

PEN-Y-COED was a small, two-storied, gable-end cottage, embowered in ivy; with latticed windows, with lozenge-shaped panes. Immediately under the library and dining-room windows was a parterre of choice flowers, with a vast variety of standard rose-trees, and an old-fashioned sun-dial in the midst of them; then, from the lodge-gate, running parallel with one side of the house, was a wide well-gravelled carriage road, leading through to another road and another lodge, each entrance being shaded by some patriarchal elms and horse-chestnuts; and on one side of this drive, partitioned off with iron palings, was a large meadow in which cows and sheep were grazing; while on the other side, at the back of the house, before coming to the large well-stocked fruit-garden, which was enclosed with high walls, and was about a quarter of a mile from the house, there was a rookery; and though the sun was now rapidly disappearing the crows were still clamorously telling the woods and fields, and to the deepening twilight, their Methuselah legends.

Charley, who was sitting in the window, seeing Mrs. Penrhyn and Mr. Lethbridge coming up the avenue, ran out to meet them with Fluff in his arms, the snowy uniformity of the latter's head being intersected with postage stamps which were continued down his back.

"Why, Charley," laughed Mr. Lethbridge, "what have you been making Fluff, not a Post-Captain but a Post-Catskin for?"

"Oh, he's been so naughty; he very nearly killed one of Mrs. Lewyn's canaries; and so, to punish him, I'm going to put him in the post as we go home, and send him to Miss Prosser, for he is only fit to live with old tabbies," said Charley in a loud and angry voice, talking at Fluff. And then added, "stoop down, Mr. Lethbridge, I want to whisper you. I don't *really* mean to send Fluff away to old Prosser's, but I've put the postage stamps all over him to frighten him, and make him *think* I do; so mind you make him think so too."

"Oh, Fluff, Fluff! I'm ashamed of you," cried he, immediately entering into Charley's plot, to the great delight of the latter; "to think that a cat of your hitherto immaculate coat and conduct, should ever have been beguiled into thinking that a bird in the paw was worth two in the cage, and so have converted yourself from the first of felines into a Post Meridian Grimalkin. Fie! fie!"

On every house-top, and in every gutter you will henceforward be shunned as a ticket-of-leave cat."

"May-hew," said Fluff in reply to this exordium, as Charley, laughing and in great glee, bounded on before them into the house, with his pre-paid favourite in his arms—further lecturing him by pointing out to him, as a model of unerring propriety, his canine colleague, the sleek and silvery Swiftpaws, who was stretched out on the rug before the fire—the very incarnation of courtesy and comfort—abandoning ears, feet, and tail to every insidious invasion, without either resistance or retaliation.

May was sitting on the sofa beside Mrs. Lewyn, and Linda was looking over an album of drawings and water-colours with rather a supercilious expression of face.

Their mutual greetings over, Mr. Lethbridge took up a book that was lying open on the table, saying—

"What have you got here, Mrs. Lewyn? is it good? for I really long for a good novel, which is neither a tissue of unnatural vulgarities nor bare-faced plagiaries through which are conveyed pompous and cold-blooded immoralities."

"What is it?" rejoined she.

Lady Lee's Widowhood.

"Oh! excellent! the best novel I have read a long time—clever, exceedingly interesting, equally natural; for, like Thackeray's novels, it describes society as it is, and people as they are, and is not an *appliquée* of the refuse of a Marine-store shop at St. Giles's, (or Bleedingheart-court, wherever that is) on improbable incidents and impossible events. In *Lady Lee's Widowhood* there is not a dull page, and the author is much happier in drawing female characters than men generally are, with the exception of Lady Lee herself, who, though we are told she is exceedingly clever, gives no single evidence of it; for from first to last she is as complete a nullity as most men conceive that a model woman should be. Another great charm of this book is, that there are none of the chartered vulgarisms of modern *il*-literature in it—or at least, only ONE—which is a rather frequent use of that very vulgar Carlylean expression of 'the like;' but despite this one small speck in the sun, the book is charming to the very end, and the *dénouement* naturally brought about; and I maintain that the incident at the christening, where we are told that the tear that dropped from poor Josiah's eye on the cheek of Hester's child, was the first drop of holy water that touched it, has more real pathos in it than all the wire-drawn sentimentalities of that last century *vau rien*, Lawrence Sterne, and indisputably ten thousand times more than all the pompously draped sensualities of his resurrectionist in the present day. In short, what I like in this book is, that without any of the foot-light tinsel and theatrical frippery of fine sentiments, the author seems to have a healthy and clearly defined idea of the length and depth of the gulf which exists between right and wrong."

"From your account I shall certainly read it," said Mr. Lethbridge; "for any thing either healthy or genuine, even in a book, is a relief to one in this age of solemn, and all other shames."

"Do you not think," said Mrs. Lewyn, "that this *universal sham*—which is the registered wrap-rascal of all private and public affairs—arises from *words* in the present day—even when they are evident lies, and palpable perjuries—being considered everything, and actions nothing?"

"Of course I do; and it is precisely on this account, that if the most damning *facts* are proved against a peer, or a gentleman (?) in a court of justice, he has only to perjure himself by a summary denial of the whole, to be quite as well received in our *moral* society, if not better, and at our 'moral Court,' as if no such awkward little pieces of secret history had ever transpired. It is for this reason too, that in our much vaunted courts of justice, a murderer's counsel, though in full possession of the prisoner's confession of his guilt, impiously and blasphemously calls God to witness that *he* believes the prisoner at the bar innocent; or asseverates that in his conscience he does so; and that upon the *words* which go to constructing these sacrilegious perjuries, a sapient jury, nine times out of ten, acquit some complex villain, who has been *proved* such by the strongest *facts*, because the vapour-breath of a bold perjured assertion is deemed sufficient in the inverse and much-warped Brummagem charity (?) of the present day, to outweigh them. And it is for this reason also, with the addition of a little peerage-worship, which is the great distinguishing national type of the Anglo-Saxons, the flat nose of the Calmuc, that the late Duke of Wellington, though he had passed his life in breaking the seventh commandment, till age reminded him that Death's dark legion had still to be led—that the Styx had still to be crossed—and that victory might not be quite so sure on the other side, as it was at the Douro and Guadalquivir, that he regularly attended heavenly parade at eight every morning in the Chapel Royal, which caused many of our clergy, whose consciences were apparently made of the same elastic material as that of counsel's for defendants in criminal prosecutions, to proclaim his Grace, in the funeral sermons they preached on his demise, 'a man after God's own heart.' Now this certainly must have arisen from a confusion, or rather, a transposition of cause and effect in the Sternhold-and-Hopkin's edition of the *History of King David*. But again, behold the omnipotence of *words*! For our being in our every act and thought the most tuft-hunting, mammon-worshipping and servile people under the sun, to all the powers that be, or even to the faintest shadows of those powers, does not prevent our vaunting our independence, nationally and individually, on all occasions; till, because we are bearish in manner and morose in spirit, where the fenitive electuary of self-interest does not intervene, we have ended by assuming as an incontrovertible fact, that we are an

independent people; whereas, in reality we are press-ridden, peer-ridden, court-ridden, cant-ridden, and above all, purse-ridden; all which hippomacy effectually tramples down our moral courage, that 'great first cause,' and best bulwark of all real independence. M. Barthélemy Hauréau in his *François Premier et sa Cour*, says—

"Le noble Anglais est égoïste et sombre; l'ivresse même: et souvent il s'enivre (?) ne le rend ni plus généreux, ni plus gai. Si d'ailleurs, il ne parle pas de ses antiques privilèges, avec la jactance de l'Espagnol, il n'y tient pas moins; son esprit morose a le goût de l'indépendance.' Now this is perfectly true, with the exception of the inebriety, which was *literally* and almost universally the case, up to the days of Pitt and Fox, and, if less general now, is by no means totally exploded. *Au reste*, Monsieur Hauréau is right; nous avons 'le goût de l'indépendance,' and we mistake the taste for this virtue, for its possession."

"I quite agree with you and with him," said Mrs. Lewyn; "but, indeed, independence is not the *only* virtue which *talking* about makes us fancy we possess."

"Yea, verily. We are a nation of imitators without individuality; and Martial's—

'Nemo suos (hæc est aulæ natura potentis)
Sed domini mores Cæsarianus habet,'

seems to have been written with a prophetic view to England. But what treasures are you keeping there all to yourself, Miss Linda?" added Mr. Lethbridge, walking to the back of her chair, and looking over her shoulder into the album.

"I don't think you'll call them such when you look at them," said Linda, who drew remarkably well herself; "indeed, I wonder Mrs. Lewyn should have honored the most of them with a place in this magnificently bound book."

"Linda!" said Mrs. Penrhyn, frowning at her, "if you will always form hasty opinions, you should either refrain from expressing them, or do so less rudely."

Linda coloured, and looked as much as to say:—"Well, but surely drawings *must* be judged by their appearances," but she said nothing; and Mrs. Lewyn, either not hearing, or affecting not to hear, turned to her sister, and laying her hand on hers, said—

"May, dearest May, I have a *great* favour to ask you, if it will not fatigue you too much?"

"Nothing that I can do for you, dear Mrs. Lewyn, or that will afford you any pleasure will fatigue me; so pray let me know what it is, and make me happy by thinking that there is anything that I can do for you," replied May.

"Well, it is to sing me something; for it is so long since I have heard that sweet—sweet voice of yours, May."

"Oh! is that all?" said May, smiling, as she instantly rose from the sofa; "I was in hopes it was something a little more difficult."

Mr. Lethbridge preceded her to the piano and opened it, after which he arranged the music stool, asking her if it was high enough.

"Thanks; it will do very well."

"Stop, May!" cried Charley, getting down off of the chair upon which he had been perched looking at the drawings with Linda, and hugging the much-put-upon Fluff still in his arms; "stop, don't begin till I come;" and so saying, and calling Swiftpaws over from his cosy quarters before the fire, they all three took up their quarters under the piano; and May, after a slight prelude sang, in a most touching voice, that exquisite ballad of John Parry's—

"LONG TIME AGO.

"By the lake where droop'd the willow—
Long time ago;
Where the rock throws back the billow—
Whiter than snow;
Dwelt a maid, beloved and cherished
By high and low;
But with Autumn's leaf she perished—
Long time ago.

"Mingled were our hearts for ever—
Long time ago;
Can I e'er forget her?—never!
No—lost one—no!
To her grave these tears are given—
Ever to flow,
She's the star I missed from Heaven—
Long time ago."

When May's voice had ceased to vibrate through the last thrilling plaintive cadence of this most lovely air, no murmur of applause ensued, but an ill-suppressed sob escaped from her four auditors, while Charley, with that cruel proclaiming of sad thoughts, peculiar to children, flinging Fluff down as unceremoniously as if he had been a ball, sprang into her lap, and throwing his arms round her neck, said eagerly, opening his eyes to their widest extent, as he peered into her face—

"But it's *not your* grave, May?—say it isn't—it's only the girl's in the song—isn't it?"

"Yes," said she, kissing him; "it was as I have just told you—long time ago;—besides, you know, Charley, I'm not a star, that I should be missed from Heaven."

"No, you are not," rejoined Charley, thoughtfully, "but if you were, and were to fall out of it, as I have seen stars do of a summer's night, I'm sure I should miss you, indeed I should May, even if it was as full—as full—oh, but as full of other stars, as the Burnley meadows are full of kingcups."

"Thank you, darling," said May, kissing his eyes, lips and forehead, as she put back his thick waving hair; "then I must take care when I do get among the stars, not to lose my place." But perceiving that there were nothing but silent tears stealing all

around her, she walked over to Mr. Lethbridge, and said with a joyous laugh, as she laid her hand upon his wrist—

“Now traitor, I’ve caught you; and do you suppose that your high crimes and misdemeanors in so long and so frequently neglecting me and my Hebrew, shall go unpunished: if you do, you never were more mistaken; and so now, I am about to take signal vengeance on you.”

She paused for a moment looking laughingly into his eyes; whereupon, assuming the same highflown strain, he raised her hand to his lips, and said—

“Most sovereign lady, in all humility your slave awaits his just sentence at your hands.”

“It is, then, that you forthwith return to the place from whence I came, and there remain till you have sung us a song, which, in commutation of your sentence, we will graciously allow you to select for yourself.”

“Ah, naughty Mr. Lethbridge! and sly as naughty, since it seems that you can sing, too, as well as do everything else, though you have so artfully concealed the fact from all but our dear May Queen,” said Mrs. Lewyn.

“Only” rejoined he, folding his hands together, as if about to pray, and demurely shaking his head; “as much as is commanded to be sung or said in churches.”

“Not true,” exclaimed May, “for instead of correcting and perusing my far more interesting Hebrew exercises, I have more than once surprised the man *Chopinising* on my piano, that is, evoking the most weird and wizardish, unearthly voluntaries, and then suddenly lifting up his voice to give utterance to the pretty love-gaude and soft summer-air and silver-rivered sighs, sighed long ago by Lord Surrey, John Barnfylde, Sir William Davenant, and Drummond of Hawthornden.”

“Now, Mr. Lethbridge, you are fairly caught,” cried Mrs. Lewyn.

“Rather say unfairly, for this is rank treachery.”

“Fair, or not fair, you *must* sing now that we know that you can do so.”

“At all events it ought to be put to the vote, for every one ought not to suffer for your and Miss Egerton’s malice.”

“Oh yes, pray do, Mr. Lethbridge,” cried Linda, while Charley began towing him towards the piano by the tails of his coat. Mary Penrhyn said nothing; but she raised her eyes to his, and apparently the look was fatal; for he instantly obeyed it, and went to the instrument. His touch was a masterly one, and, as May expressed it, he began *Chopinising* over the keys, and drew from them such sweet, low, minor, shadowy, twilight sort of harmonies, that they seemed, like the voiceless music of a dream, to steep the spirit and thrill the heart with the undefinable spell of their whispered mysteries. At length, with the most natural transition in the world, to more earthly, though not less entrancing strains, he sang those charming old words of Wotton’s, on the Queen of

Bohemia, in a voice so rich, so mellow, and so flexible, that as the notes rolled out, and blent into each other, they seemed like some rich balm expressed from many flowers, and filtered through a soft summer-air into the heart.

I.

"You meaner beauties of the night
That poorly satisfy our eyes,
More by your number than your light,—
You common people of the skies,
What are you when the sun shall rise ?

II.

"You curious chaunters of the wood
That warble forth Dame Nature's ways,
Thinking your passions understood
By your weak accents—what's your praise
When Philomel her voice shall raise ?

III.

"You violets that first appear,
By your pure purple mantles known,
Like the proud virgins of the year,
As if the spring were all your own—
What are you when the rose is blown ?

IV.

"So, when my mistress shall be seen,
In sweetness of her looks and mind,
By virtue first, then choice a queen—
Tell me if she were not design'd
Th' eclipse and glory of her kind ?"

"Charming, charming ! Thank you a thousand times. Now only *one* more, and then you shall have a respite till after tea," said Mrs. Lewyn.

And without any more pressing, Mr. Lethbridge sang *Angiol d'Amour*, as only Mario could have sang it beside himself, even to that wonderful high note at the end, which always makes one feel as if one's listening soul had, indeed, reached Heaven. It was something terrible to fall from such beatitudes adown the prosaic precipice of cups and spoons ; but the servant at that moment brought in tea, and of the whole party Charley was the only one who could, with any degree of complacency, listen to the silver sounds, the metallic singing of the hissing, bubbling kettle, or think that the plum and other cakes *might* be compared with the sweetness they had just heard, and yet not suffer by the comparison.

"What a pity," exclaimed Mrs. Lewyn as she handed the young curate his tea, while he was assiduously handing the cream and sugar to Mrs. Penrhyn, and receiving, nothing loth, the silent homage of her admiration ; "what a pity that such a voice should be wasted in a village !"

"Pon my word," laughed he, "it is not very flattering to be considered a voice and nothing more, for you don't seem to have any compassion for the exiled spirit of the man."

"No, indeed," smiled she, as she made a sort of circular bow round the table, "when I look at the society you are in, I don't think there is much room for pity."

"Well, I rather agree with you, Mrs. Lewyn; and only that I am eating bread and butter, and, therefore, don't want to run the risk of being confounded with that most ridiculous of all creations—real or imaginary—Herr Werter, I should say something pretty on the occasion, or at least endeavour to do so."

"Pray don't, for you never can say anything half as pretty as you can sing; so we will take out the compliment you *should* have paid us, in another song by and bye. But, jesting apart, as you cannot always have the felicity of being in the present company, I really do think, considering how much you have to bring into a higher and wider sphere, that you have something very like super-human merit to be content with this low and narrow one."

"Don't you know, my dear Mrs. Lewyn, that no sphere that God allots us is either low or narrow, since it becomes the orbit of our own soul—and the star it is, that illumines and notifies the space, not the space the star. Then for every-day use, as old Wilbye has told us from his Hybla of world-culled wisdom—

'There is a jewel which no Indian mine can buy,
No chemic art can counterfeit;
It makes men rich in greatest poverty,
Makes water wine, turns wooden cups to gold,
The homely whistle to sweet music's strain;
Seldom it comes, to few from Heaven sent,
That much in little—all in naught—*Content*.'

And if," added he, glancing almost imperceptibly at Mary Penrhyn, "we have every reason to be content with what we have found, then, indeed, have we found Content."

"I shall have no chance with you at paradoxes; so let us leave them and talk parish, which is more adapted to my capacity. What do you think of Mr. Jowl's clever expedient, now that Church-rates are abolished?—in every other Sunday getting up a collection for apocryphal repairs in the church, or augmentations to the beadle, or the belfry; or for vestry-meetings to discuss the feasibility of abolishing mildew and church mice, or some other equally palpable and important measures?"

"Now really," laughed Mr. Lethbridge, "I should not have paid my respects to you this evening had I known that you intended to get up charades."

"Charades!" echoed Mrs. Lewyn—

"Yes; for do you not mean it for a charade of Tantalus, to convene such a party in this

'Darling room so soft and white;'

conjure up such tea, such cream, such cakes, and then suddenly destroy our zest for all and each by treacherously introducing Mr. Jowl and his parochial screw-propeller? Do pray let us for-

get the parish, now that we have got into your charming grounds. Charley, old fellow, what are *you* thinking of, you look so very serious."

"I was thinking," said Charley, as he assiduously waded through a great wedge of plum cake, "how much better it would be if there was no bread, only cake in the world; now wouldn't it?"

"I'm by no means sure that it *would* be an improvement to the present state of things. Now, for instance, how should you like to eat plum-cake with roast mutton?"

"I think I *should*," rejoined Charley, approvingly, discussing another piece of the cake, with his head on one side, the better to contemplate the bit that still remained in his hand.

"Oh, very well, you shall have some with your dinner to-morrow, Charley," said Mrs. Penrhyn.

"No, no!" cried that young gentleman resolutely, and even laying down the *débris* of the cake which he still held, "for if *you* say I may have it, I know it will be something that I shan't like, as you always play me those sort of tricks; just as you did when I wanted to see how Jenkins's new mouse-trap was made, and you let my finger be caught in it."

"I always let you buy your own experience, Charley, for two reasons: first, because it is the only experience that is worth anything; and next, because it is the shortest, though the roughest, road to all knowledge."

"Ah! but you don't do so to May and Linda. You always tell them beforehand, that things will hurt them, or be nasty, or whatever it is."

"That is because they are content to *believe* what I tell them; but *you* are a little St. Thomas, Charley, and have no faith in anything but your own eyes and fingers."

"Certainly," laughed Mr. Lethbridge, "there is a great deal of analytic chymistry in Charley's researches. He is a perfect Herapath at ferreting out even the fifty-thousandth particle of a grain of mischief, wherever it exists."

"Ah! well, you may laugh at me," said Charley, sliding off of his chair, and standing up, doubtless on the principle of the over-crammed boy, who thought he *could* eat a *little* more if he stood up; "but when I'm big I'll write a book."

"What a vindictive young rascal you must be, Charley, to threaten us with anything so dreadful! and what is your book to be about?" said Mr. Lethbridge.

"Oh! about the Doatskinry and Darlingry of dogs," said he, throwing his arms about Swiftpaw's neck. "But do *you* know any stories about lions and crocodiles, and eagles and owls, and seals and monkeys, and things? And did you ever eat with them, and lie down with them, like the man that came with the big show to Mold last month; and did they ever roar and scream at you like a thunder-storm, as they did at him? Did they, Mr. Lethbridge?"

"Alas! no, friend Charley, I never did:

'Whate'er I've seen, required no witch's storm—
Slight deeds that nature could with ease perform.
Audacious to purloin my flesh and fish,
No golden eagles hopp'd into my dish;
Nor crocodiles, by love of knowledge led
To mark my figure, left their oozy bed;
Nor loaded camels, to provoke my stare,
Sublimely whirl'd like straws amid the air;
Nor, happy in a stomach made of steel,
On roaring lions have I made a meal.'

They all laughed, and so, of course, Charley laughed, too.

"No," said Mrs. Penrhyn, "I should think, in these degenerate days, Mr. Twitcher was the only Bruce reserved for such exploits!"

"Has he yet published that ridiculous book of his that Miss Kempenfelt called *Man in Petticoats*?" asked Mrs. Lewyn.

"How can you prove yourself one of the profane vulgar, by thus evincing your ignorance?" said Mr. Lethbridge. "For not only has he published *that* invaluable work, but he has got into Parliament, been to Scotland, and written—or rather, is writing—an historical novel, which he modestly says is far superior to any of Scott's—the subject being John Knox's Night-Cap, and the style no doubt suitably somnolent; but, as it seems he was not *appreciated* more in Scotland than he is here, he hates and abuses the Scotch with a fifty-Samuel-Johnson power; and I verily believe, that as Peter Pindar wrote of the Doctor, we may with truth say of the Twitcher, that he—

— 'Saw the too kind North with jaundiced eyes,
And rode to Hawthornden's fair scene by night,
For fear a Scottish tree might wound his sight;
And bent from decent candour to depart,
Allows a Scotchman neither head nor heart.
Grant fiction half thy volumes of surprise,
High in the scale of merit shalt thou rise.
Still to Fame's temple dost thou boast pretension,
For thine the *rara avis* of invention!
And lo! amid thy work of lab'ring years,
A dignity of egotism appears—
A style that classic authors should pursue—
A style that peerless Katterfelto knew!
Thou dear man-mountain of discovery, run,
And make for *Baron's Court* some future fun."

"A very good 'abstract and brief chronicle' of Mr. Twitcher, truly," laughed Mrs. Lewyn.

"I see," said Mary Penrhyn, with a look of such concrete affection that even *he* could not desire more, "that you, Mr. Lethbridge, are as fond of Peter Pindar as my poor Harcourt is."

"Yes; I am a great admirer of his—more even of the anti-humbug of his nature, and its antagonistic principle to all servility, than of his talent."

Here the servant came to say that the car was come.

"Robert," said Mrs. Lewyn, as the man was about to close the door, "ask Sir Gregory's coachman if he thinks he could take the

white peacock I promised Miss Kempenfelt, to-night. If not, Giles must take it over to Baron's Court in the morning; but I think it might go in a game-basket on the box."

"Good night, dear Mrs. Lewyn," said May and Linda, kissing the kind old lady; "and thank you for a most delightful day."

"It has been such to me, my dear children, I assure you; but if you really found it so, I hope you will convince me that you did, by coming soon again."

"Oh! I should like to come every day," said Charley.

"What! and leave grand-papa and all of us at Baron's Court? Thank you, Charley," said Mrs. Penryhn.

"Oh, no! not leave grand-papa and all of *you*; only Aunt Charity and the lessons."

"And pray," laughed Mr. Lethbridge, "*which* of the lessons do you class Aunt Charity with?"

"Oh! the spelling lessons, because they are the most tiresome of all," said her undutiful nephew, as he held back his head to let Mrs. Lewyn's maid tie a handkerchief round his throat. It was very wrong, but a general laugh followed this speech, in which Charley immediately joined, not having been aware till then that he had said a good thing.

Mrs. Penrhyn having now hermetically muffled up May, they all took leave of their kind hostess, who accompanied them to the hall door. It was a lovely moon-light night; so that two of the party at least, regretted that they could not walk home. No sooner had they driven through the lodge than, upon May's remarking what a dear old lady Mrs. Lewyn was,—"*She is indeed*," replied Mrs. Penrhyn; "and therefore, Linda, I was both shocked and grieved at your ill-bred remark about the drawings in her album."

"Well, but, dear, they *were*, for the most part, shocking daubs; and besides, they were not *her* drawings—only bought things—or of course I should not have said what I did."

"These daubs, as you call them, not only cost more, but, all things considered, are far more precious than many artistic *chef d'œuvres*."

"Cost more!" echoed Linda in astonishment.

"Yes; those daubs have given bread to many children, and rescued their parents from misery or crime. Some of them have cost as much as two and three hundred pounds each, under the pretext of encouraging drawing talent. Mrs. Lewyn contrives to rescue her fellow-creatures from the abyss of want, without humiliating them by bestowing alms; and so invests large sums in the purchase of such daubs, affecting to have taken a violent fancy to them, and where she stumbles upon any work of real genius, she gets it sold at some London auction, that it may bring more than she could afford to give. And though she has everything about her like a gentlewoman, you see how very shabbily she dresses—one of her maxims being, that the price of a silk dress would clothe half a dozen poor children."

"How like grand-papa! Is it not?" said Linda. "But," added she, as her eyes filled with tears, "I shall never again open that album of Mrs. Lewyn's but with as much reverence as if it were a book of prayers."

"And so it is," said Mr. Lethbridge, "of the highest and most acceptable sort;—that is,—of *prayers realized*; for the Creator, like His creatures, tests the sincerity of words by deeds. The infernal regions are said to be paved with good *intentions*, from whence we may conclude that Heaven is domed with good *actions*. But what is so truly admirable in Mrs. Lewyn is her perfect Scriptural Samaritanism, *literally* not letting her left hand know what her right does. There is no ostentation—no *even parochial publicity*—no making herself fussy and feared at National schools—no running after the church bell rather than the church book—no confounding of solemnity with sanctity—no substituting the modern *text* and *soup ticket* for the aboriginal oil and two-pence, and, above all, no Missionary MEZUZOTHS* at her door-posts to let all the world know the piety that dwells within. In a word, she *does* her duty *in* that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call her, and is not for ever seeking occasions to trumpet herself out of it."

"She has indeed," said Mary Penrhyn, "in *every way* chosen the better part."

"Here we are at Baron's Court. As it wants a quarter to ten," said Mr. Lethbridge, looking at his watch, "I should not think Sir Gregory will be gone to bed; and I want to speak to him before I go home."

"Will you not sleep here to-night?" asked May; "you know 'MR. LETHBRIDGE'S ROOM' is one of the rooms of Baron's Court."

"I know from long experience, that hospitality, kindness, and every other virtue reigns, at Baron's Court; but I cannot avail

* This name was given by the Jews to certain pieces of parchment that they fixed in the door-posts of their houses, according to Deut. vi. 9, and xi. 13; where, that they should not forget the laws of God, it is said, "Thou shalt write them on the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." To fulfil this command literally, and to avoid the scoffs and profanations of the wicked, the Rabbis taught that they ought at least to write it on parchment, and to enclose it in something; wherefore they wrote it upon a square piece of parchment prepared on purpose, with a particular sort of ink, and in a square kind of character (Deut. vi. 4, 6, 8, &c.). "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD," &c. Then they left a little space, and afterwards went on (Deut. xi. 13), "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently to my commandments," &c., as far as "thou shalt write them," &c. After this they rolled up the parchment and put it into a case, and wrote on the end of it SHADAI, which is one of the names of God. They put it at the doors of their houses, chambers, and all places most frequented; they fixed it to the knockers of their doors, on the right side, and every time they went in and out they touched it with the end of one of their fingers, which they afterwards kissed devoutly.

myself of them any more this evening, as business awaits me at home; so I will wish you good night here," said he, shaking hands with them all in the hall, and adding a low and fervent "God bless you," over the last hand he pressed. And then, having ascertained from Gifford that Sir Gregory was up and alone, he followed him to the library.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH LETTER. THE CLOUD WITH A SILVER LINING. THE HEART WITH A GOLDEN ONE. A LAST GOOD NIGHT!

WHEN Gifford threw open the library-door, and announced Mr. Lethbridge, the latter perceived Sir Gregory leaning on his elbow, buried in thought, with evident and strong traces of distress on his countenance, and his right hand resting on a letter that was open on the table before him. Mr. Lethbridge drew back, saying, "I fear I interrupt you; I will call to-morrow morning."

"No, no; pray come in! On the contrary, I'm glad you have come, Lethbridge, for there are times, that perhaps it is better for one not to be alone."

The curate looked at him kindly and inquiringly, and yet hesitated for some seconds before he ventured to give utterance to his sympathy and anxiety. At length he said—

"There are persons, my dear Sir Gregory, who, from never having any solitary enjoyments, have no right to have solitary sorrows; and you are one of them. I fear, nay, I am almost certain, that since I left you after dinner, something has occurred to distress you; and while, from having no right to pry into your affairs, I shrink from doing so, yet, in common with all who have the privilege of knowing you, I feel that I *have* a right—if the sincerest friendship and esteem can give one—to share your affections. Resent my obtrusiveness if you will, but don't, *pray don't*, refuse to answer my appeal."

The old man grasped the young man's hand, and pressed it cordially within his own, while as he arose and walked towards the mantel-piece, he passed his own hand over his eyes.

"*Cui bono?* Lethbridge, what must be, will be," sighed he, and then added, after a short pause,—“And yet, there's no one of whose judgment I have a higher opinion than of yours; or whose advice I would rather take, or be decided by, when 'halting between two opinions;' and I am at this moment, I candidly confess to you, in a perfect *chevaux-de-frise* of dilemmas. I know

and feel, that in yielding, I am walking deliberately into the snare of a villain, and yet that if I refuse, being completely at his mercy, he can and will, not only spring a mine under *me*, but *mine*."

The young curate seated himself in an easy chair beside the fire, knowing that his agitated companion would intuitively follow his example and take the opposite one, (which he did); and having deposited his hat and cane on the table, he said—

"Now, my dear Sir Gregory, let us see what can be done, by holding a Mouse-and-Lion council. Knowing that there is only *one* villain in the world in whose power you can possibly be, I take it for granted that you have received some fresh annoyance, touching the mortgage on Baron's Court, from that vulgar *parvenu*, Sir Titaniferous Thompson? And even before I know what it is, my unhesitating and uncompromising advice to you is, on *no* account yield to any fresh extortion of his."

Sir Gregory shook his head. "The worst of it is, Lethbridge, that I have been in the habit of yielding to these extortions, not so much from any culpable weakness, as from the intention of lessening the amount of the capital; therefore, whenever I could by possibility scrape any monies over and above the stipulated periodical instalments, I have always made them over to him. Now this evening's post brings me a letter from the shark, saying that he has had very heavy losses and disbursements, and that if I can, before the end of the month, let him have £4000 in *advance*, instead of foreclosing the mortgage next year, when it expires, he will give me eighteen months' more law."

"On no account accede to this, my dear Sir Gregory," said his young adviser, plunging the poker with as much vengeance into the midst of a large block of coal emitting innumerable jets of gas, and shivering it to fragments with as much unerring skill as if the poker had been a foil, and the coal the *parvenu* baronet, whom he was running through the body.

"I cannot—or at least I cannot without further sacrifices, which, for the sake of those poor darling children, I should be very unwilling to make, for there is no use in stripping the place and so preserving an empty shell for them, from which that vulgar sharper has extracted the kernel. And yet, on the other hand, if I do not, I know the wretch I have to deal with *well*—he will pounce upon us to the day—to the hour—nay, to the very minute; and were there nothing left but those poor orphans' bones, those would he grind down in true ogre style 'to make his bread.'"

"My dear Sir Gregory, a year, in the weaving of events, is an eternity; for Omnipotence only requires minutes to will, or to dissolve, worlds—to make or unmake destinies. *Wait* till the year comes round, and *then* pay off what remains of this mortgage."

"But what if I can't? The residue is nine thousand five hundred pounds; and, like Lear, 'I am old, now,' and therefore have no one to turn to for help. Kindred and friends the grave has

long since closed upon, and, at my age, who wants either, must seek them there."

"With regard to kindred, it is the natural course of things that it should be so," said the curate, his eyes glistening with more than their usual brightness; "but hearts, my dear Sir Gregory, are God's meadows. Some, it is true, like the green ones of the outer world, are barren and unproductive enough, from want of the sunlight of a genial nature and the sympathetic irrigations of a Christian one; but when they *are* rich and fertile, like yours, for instance, their crops are troops of friends; and, though like the sweet clover of the fields, these may be, and are, mowed down by the inevitable scythe, it is only to be succeeded by fresh ones—at least *not inferior* to their predecessors. *This is my conviction*; and I am almost selfish enough to rejoice even in a misfortune to you, which affords me an opportunity of convincing you that this conviction is no idle theory."

"My dear Lethbridge," said Sir Gregory, holding out his hand to him, "I knew I could calculate on your sympathy and your counsel; and, believe me, I do not underrate either. And proudly and gratefully do I both acknowledge and accept, and I hope I need not add, reciprocate your friendship. But when I talked of having no friends, the term was an erroneous one; I merely meant, I had no contemporary ones to whom I could *now* apply, nor from whom I could accept pecuniary assistance."

"Neither did I, my dear Sir Gregory," said the young man, cordially returning the pressure of his hand, "mean, when I spoke of friends, to offer you in your embarrassment the arid glebe of a curate's friendship. Thank God, I am now in a position to prove to you (though, compared with what I owe you, but very slightly) the sincerity of my gratitude, and the unbounded esteem I entertain for you; and I can with truth affirm, that *this* is not only the *first*, but the *sole* pleasure (as yet,) which this new page of life has given me."

Seeing that his companion looked mystified and inquiringly, he added, taking the electric-telegraph letter out of his pocket—"My reason for intruding on you to-night was to tell you that this despatch, which I got at dinner to day, was to let me know that poor Lord Aronby, whom I do not pretend to regret, as I had never seen him, died of apoplexy this morning."

"My dear fellow! I congratulate you with all my heart."

"No, not with *all* your heart. Pray, my dear Sir Gregory, don't waste anything so precious on what is comparatively of so little value; for I want the *whole* of your good, kind, heart, to wish me joy on another subject, which is far nearer mine."

Again Sir Gregory looked up inquiringly.

"The fact is, to-day has been the day of my destiny; not for having put me in possession of a coronet and the broad lands of Glenomera Castle, but for having given me the heart of the most

charming, the most noble, and the most loveable woman that ever existed. You may indeed *now* congratulate me with all your heart, aye, and your soul too, my-dear Sir Gregory, for I'm going to be married."

"Going to be married!" echoed Sir Gregory, and, putting on a comical expression of countenance and pulling his under lip, he added—"My congratulations must entirely depend upon who the lady is. Do I know her?"

"Yes."

"Well, or slightly?"

"Intimately."

"Humph! I always, in conjectures, as in arguments, like to dispose of the negatives first, which pioneer the way as it were, to the positives. Therefore, I suppose I may safely assert, without fear of contradiction, that it is *not* my sister Charity."

"No," laughed the bridegroom elect, "though it is some one very like a Sister of Charity, as far as angelic goodness and a total abnegation of self goes, with an extensive knowledge of *how* to be useful, as well as a boundless wish to be so."

"God bless me! Not marked with the small pox—blind of an eye—a nose 'like Mars, to threaten and command!' and inclined to prove to the world that moustaches are epicene, I hope?"

"No, on the contrary; manners of the most entralling gentleness, with what would be the beauty of an angel—if she had not something better—that of a woman."

"Oh! 'vanity of vanities!' Listen to the profane idolater. Is it because the peer has begun that the parson is to end; or, as Mr. Jowl would *anathematically* express it, have you indeed forsaken the LORD, and made to yourself idols of clay?"

"No; no idolatry, either in the singular or plural, but only a most holy sanctuary, wherein to keep my true faith for ever."

"Where? and who can it be?" mused Sir Gregory, and—remembering Mary Penrhyn's oft-repeated warning—for a moment May flashed across his mind; but the next the idea faded from it, and he sighed deeply as he thought how she was fading, too. Besides, had it been her, the curate would scarcely have announced his intended marriage as a settled thing without even asking or consulting him.

"My dear Lord Aronby," said he, addressing him by his new title for the first time, "I lose myself in vain conjectures, so must beg of you to solve the enigma you have propounded; only hoping, for your sake and my own, that your choice has fallen on no London Miss or Widow, who, for the most part, as Brantôme said of Marguerite de Valois, *en matière de galanterie en savent plus que leur pain quotidien*."

"No; if she has any resemblance to Marguerite de Valois it ends with the beauty and the wit, and *Marot's*, not Brantôme's

sketch of her; for I may truly say of her, as Marot did of Marguerite—

‘Son cœur constant, est pour heur, ou malheur,
Jamais trop gai, ni trop mélancolique.’”

“The more lavishly you throw in the perfections, the more I am puzzled; for I know of but *one* phoenix in this part of the world; and had you seen more of her, I should have felt convinced that your good taste and nice judgment could not have passed her over. But, as it is, you seem to have kept out of her way.”

“*Qui'l sait ?*” smiled the young man; “you know *on se retire pour mieux sauter*. But to end your suspense,” added he, walking to the table, and writing on a sheet of paper which he handed to Sir Gregory, “here is the name of my *rare avis*.”

“Mary Penrhyn! I am, indeed, delighted, and *do* with all my heart and soul congratulate you! For a more filtered nature, if I may so express myself, a more finished excellence than hers I have rarely, if ever, met. The furnace-fires of affliction have truly left the ore of that golden heart pure and unalloyed. But do tell me all about it. After all, you must have been a sly dog to have kept the matter so snug.”

“My dear Sir Gregory, that is an unjust accusation, for I assure you, *you* have been made acquainted with my happiness as soon as I knew it myself.” And he here gave his attentively listening companion a circumstantial detail of all that had taken place between him and Mary Penrhyn on that day, concluding with—“And now, my dear Sir Gregory, I must trespass on your kindness to tell her of Lord Aronby's death, and my sudden *reverse of fortune*, which I have not yet had the courage to do, as I have been hugging myself in the delightful certainty of her loving me for myself alone, as a poor penniless curate; and it is only this very evening that, in contemplating my possible change of position, though still supposing it far distant on the horizon of the future, she expressed a deep-rooted aversion, not to say disgust, to again being obliged to mix in a society, whole hollow selfishness, truculent vice, sordid corruption, and utter destitution of all those redeeming qualities which Christianity enjoins, and which Christians profess, long ago weaned her from.”

“She is right; and all who have graduated in those same great temples of vice and venality—our fashionable, political, and literary hemispheres—cannot, if one spark of truth is left in them, but endorse her opinion. A certain Oxford scholar, one Master Ingulph, was wont to boast that after he had mastered Aristotle he *then clothed himself down to the heels* with the first and second rhetoric of Tully. So I, for one, having mastered English society, have clothed myself down to the heels with a thorough knowledge of its loathsome hypocrisy and its execrable cant; and it is one of the laws of necessity, that both cant and hypocrisy *should be paramount*

in a state where PROPERTY is the ONLY thing legislated for, and Mammon-worship—under the blasphemous *sobriquet* of Christianity—is the established religion of the country. For such a system, a shilling, and much more a sovereign, will, of course, outweigh a soul any day. Are Simpkins's turnips tampered with by some hungry plough-boy, the irate 'landed proprietor' instantly fires off a letter to *The Times*, generously disclaiming any care for his *own individual* loss (?), but, in a fine plethora of patriotism, pointing out the incipient detriment such depredations may occasion to the Agricultural Interest; when, lo! a thousand Protectionist pens leap from their inkstands to respond to this truly national appeal. But were Simpkins to have been cruelly aggrieved by any of his neighbours, or outraged by any member of his family, and was ass enough to seek the sympathy or assistance of his fellow-creatures, he would be curtly told by every newspaper editor in the kingdom that the *public* had nothing to do with affairs of a private nature; for *tangibly* there is no money involved in moral injuries, though, virtually, there is a great deal. Therefore if Smith's daughter is seduced, it is legally and specifically stated that *it is for the loss of her services* that he is to be indemnified; the wreck of the girl's soul and body and peace of mind being, of course, beyond the marketable point of view, and consequently trifles of no importance whatsoever, and being merely of a *private* and *domestic* nature, neither the public nor the legislature can be expected to feel the slightest interest in them. The same monetary principle reigns even in our conquests, for we never forget that we are a nation of shopkeepers. Wherever the Romans invaded they brought blessings, for in exchange for the arid soil that they captured they left a long broad track of civilization. The modern Gauls do the same. Wherever they make barbaric conquests, *their* first care is to do honor to the God whom they worship, by erecting to Him temples in the strange land, and leading its natives to His altars. We go to work after a more highwayman sort of fashion, and plainly tell the poor heathens that their money or their lives we *must* have; and as for all the rest, far be it from us to interfere with them; as free-born Britons, we should be sorry to meddle with the prejudices of fettered-born Barbarians, so they are at perfect liberty to worship their idols of wood or of stone as long as they like, we having but one idol all the world over—to wit, the Sheffield pattern of the golden calf, found in the current coin of every country. Out of this intense and universal Mammon-worship it is that, of course, arises our verbal virtue and practised vice, and makes of our criminal and civil code a farcical social cobweb, constructed upon entomological principles, wherein small offenders get entangled and strangled, while the large, buzzing, blustering, burley, blue-bottle miscreants, break through all its nominal restraints, and fill the world with their noise."

"True, and this foul Mammon-worship it is which has filled our

times with spurious ambitions, and made private vice and utter want of principle a sort of diploma, as it were, to public honors; for ambition, like every other passion, is dual. In noble natures, it always aspires upwards; whereas in mean ones it becomes the most unscrupulous of all vices, whether it vaults from the tortuous steps of a throne, or springs from the prurient corruption of a dunghill, an extended *circumference* being its sole aim, of which SELF is at once the paltry centre and the paltry limit. With such men, to *seem* is everything, to *be*, nothing. Their strongest desire, their unique purpose, is to distinguish themselves from the crowd; they have an *un-intermitting* fever to do whatsoever shall make them known—that is, talked about—which is the small change for celebrity, as the vulgar imagine that it pre-supposes a great capital of merit; the object of such ephemeral charlatans, such *touters* to tradition, being *codile-qu'il-codte* to assert a powerful ascendancy not only over the attention, but also over the opinions of their fellow men; and this ONE aim absorbs all the energies of their intellectual, and swamps all those of their moral, nature; for no man, who, à la Caligula, erects a temple to himself, of which SELF is likewise the High Priest, ever yet thought that there was sufficient room in the world for any one *but* self. Therefore such men are ever ready with the blackest of extinguishers to put out the lights of others, unless it be some few farthing rush-lights, which, by their dim contrast, add to their own brilliancy; to such, indeed, they will gladly play the Mæcenas and the magnanimous; even to furnishing them with golden sconces for their small glimmerings. The more I look back into the past, and round about upon the present, the more I fear that Nature is a niggard, and never can achieve one great and uniform noble work without making a thousand mediocrities, or monstrosities, to balance her lavishness. For instance—as we all preach for our own parish—to select a bright ornament from my own profession; when, for example, Nature made Sydney Smith large in his *physique*, larger in his heart and mind, genuine in his goodness, original in his genius, Christian in his conduct, many-sided in his capacities, wise in his wit, witty in his wisdom, eloquent in his ethics, ethical in his eloquence, pious in his practice, and unpharisaical in his piety—pray how many men, husbands, fathers, friends, authors, *beaux esprits*, and prelates, do you suppose Nature defrauded to endow this prodigal son of hers, who, unlike most favourites, it must be confessed, deserved, and did credit to her partiality?"

"Why, she certainly robbed to destitution," laughed Sir Gregory, "in framing the Incumbent of Combe Florey, more of all and each of the class you have mentioned than I should care to risk my head by enumerating, under the present *PURROCRACY*. But as the *ne plus ultra* of all the iniquities rising like a death-laden malaria out of the foul idolatry of our national Mammon-worship, look at our revolting and disgracefully one-sided Ecclesiastical laws!"

"Oh! those I console myself by thinking are so bad, so cryingly monstrous! that they *must* and will right themselves; for the marriage laws of England as they exist, and the *happy* couples which are their result, may all be summed up and condensed in one pithy couplet from *The New Tale of a Tub*—

‘Oh, dear! oh, dear! it’s very clear
They can’t live so, but they daren’t let go.’

But to return to one of the black-thorns of the Mammon-tree which graces, or, as some are *borne* enough to think, disgraces our charming social system—the received opinion that vice once gilt becomes virtue; and that ungilded merit, however exalted, amounts, if not to actual gilt, at least only to a cipher which can never make a figure; which system it is that puts such men as Sir Titaniferous Thompson into fine houses, and fills those houses with servile satellites. Now, my dear Sir Gregory, I have *one* great favour still to ask at your hands, in addition to all the innumerable ones I have already received—it is, that you will hallow my accession to the root of all evil, by allowing me to deal with this man when the mortgage expires."

"I thank you, my dear Aronby, not a thousand times, but with a thousand hearts, for your generous kindness; but it is impossible! I should think myself a second Sir Titaniferous, preying upon the inexperience of youth, could I bring myself to take advantage of your first ray of Fortune's sunshine to bask in it."

"Oh, Sir Gregory! Sir Gregory! I had hoped—I *had* believed in better things from *you*; but your simile is as false as your delicacy, for is not sunshine catholic and not contracted? But I see with even the best and purest, the mildew of mortal imperfection may be found when circumstances call it forth. Reverse our positions, and would *you* not do that?—aye, and ten times more for me. Ah! Sir Gregory, it is cruel and offensive, to say the least of it, to show me so plainly that you do not, even in so trifling a matter, think *me* worthy of being placed on a par with you."

"My dear Lethbridge—let me still call you so, for I shall never love any other name so well," said Sir Gregory, dashing away a tear—"since you put it on *that* footing it is true; for, though in this race of Time, my lengthening shadow warns me how I have distanced you in years, the light of experience shows me how far *you* have out-stripped *me* in all the best and noblest virtues of which human nature is silently, actively, and unostentatiously capable; and, therefore, it is to be feared that I never shall attain to the level, that is, to the height of your pedestal."

The young man shook his head mournfully, and said, with a look of deep and unaffected disappointment, "Ah! my dear Sir Gregory, compliments and sophistry are not argument; but, thank Heaven," added he, suddenly brightening, "as you never have yet interfered between Mary and her pupils, you cannot for very shame

begin to do so now ; and I know her horror of *post mortem* bequests, that mouldy, grave-girt generosity (?) which can never give from its most abundant superfluity, but munificently leaves what it cannot take with it, and, therefore, carrying out her peculiar views on this subject, if she likes to give each of her pupils ten thousand pounds a-piece—which I know is exactly what she *would* like—she shall have my cordial concurrence, and you can scarcely object to *their* subscribing three thousand a-piece to settle Sir *Parvenu* Thompson's claims. So that's all right," laughed he, snapping his fingers, as the amiable Mr. William Palmer did, when informed by Newton that a grain of strychnia left no traces after death.

But the old man did not laugh ; he fairly burst into tears and covered his face with one hand, while he extended the other to his companion, and said—

"I am not ashamed of these, Lethbridge ; let them thank you, for words cannot. But—but—noble and generous as you are, one can't, one don't accept such presents——"

"Oh, yes one does!" replied he, his handsome face now radiant, as he nearly shook Sir Gregory's hand off. "Only, one accepts them, as Tacitus tells us the Germans receive, or used to receive presents, and give them too, without any reciprocations of gratitude. *You owe me none*, I assure you, and though, judging by the immense amount of unalloyed happiness I feel, I suppose I *ought* to owe you a great deal, yet I don't or *won't*—I mean I have no intention—of paying you, but will go on being in your debt till the end of the chapter, to prove that I enter upon my new dignity with a proper sense of what is due to my order. And yet look what I *do* owe you, and even that dear, detestable, ugly, vulgar, vicious, swindling sharper, Sir Titaniferous Thompson! as but for him, and his doings, I never could have had an opportunity of giving Mary more pleasure than all the Aronby diamonds, or all the heirlooms of Glenomera Castle put together, I know, ever *will* give her. But I must have it all *en règle* ; all sealed, and signed ; or else I shall wake to-morrow morning (if, indeed, I sleep to night) thinking it all a dream, too good to be true, too happy to last. So now, my dear Sir Gregory, not another word," added he, hurrying him over to the writing-table, pressing him down into the chair with both hands on his shoulders, and placing a pen in his hand ; —"crown all your goodness by writing to that rascally fellow exactly what I shall dictate——"

"But, my dear Lethbridge——"

"No 'buts,' unless, indeed, you like to make a butt of Sir Titaniferous.

"Sir,

"I must beg leave most explicitly to decline your compromise of a further advance of £4000 on the mortgage-money of

Baron's Court, being fully prepared to meet all your just demands at the expiration of the mortgage.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"GREGORY KEMPENFELT.

"To Sir Titaniferous Thompson, Bart., M.P.,

"Dunnington House,

"Hyde Park,

"London."

"There! now when sealed give it to me, and let me put it into the post *myself*; or, like the children, I shall never feel sure that it is gone."

"Oh! Lethbridge, am I waking, or am I sleeping?"

"It is fit for all good people by this time to be the latter; but as I shall have to go to London soon, and it may be some time before the poor curate of Llylisfern, your domestic chaplain-in-ordinary, has the happiness of reading prayers for you again, we will have them now," and so saying, in order to prevent Sir Gregory uttering a word, he rang the bell, which, being answered—

"Gifford," said he, "Sir Gregory wishes to have prayers in the library to-night."

"Very good, Sir; do you sleep here to-night, Mr. Lethbridge?"

"No, I *must* return home; so have the goodness to let Miss Kempenfelt and the servants know immediately, Gifford."

And soon the whole household came pouring in, with the exception of May, Linda, and Charley, who were all gone to bed.

"Not a word about Lord Aronby's death to-night," said his successor, in a low and hurried voice to Sir Gregory, as Miss Charity, Mary Penrhyn, and the rest of the household entered. His voice, at all times deep, mellow, impressive, and beautifully modulated, was peculiarly so on this night; for it almost seemed, in the extempore prayer with which he invariably concluded the stereotyped devotions, as if the angel who had brought him so many glad tidings on that day still lingered in his heart, as in a holy place; and as he spoke those solemn things, telling them how thin was the barrier between heaven and earth, the mingled feeling that thrilled through his words was as the fluttering of that angel's silver wings, attuning his every thought to God, and purifying them from earth's corrupting leaven. "My dear friends," said he, in conclusion—"whatever your cares, your sufferings, or your fears, or even your joys and your hopes, cast them on Him who careth for you. A great sorrow we *cannot* bear without His gracious help, and a great joy we have no right to, till we have offered up its first-fruits, the outpourings of a glad spirit, to Him who gave it,—to Him—

“Who bids the humble daisy pass
From winter's sleep to deck our grave ;
And who with verdure clothes the grass,
And still upholds the life He gave ?
The Lord of life, the grass, the flower,
He quickened, and will sustain ;
And by the same Almighty power
Our dust shall rise again.”

“Good night ! God bless you !” said he, to all and each, shaking hands with them, as soon as the servants had left the room ; and as Miss Charity was deaf, and busily through her eye-glass investigating the name of a newspaper on the table, and Sir Gregory, being troubled with an unusual suffusion of the eyes, had turned towards the fire-place to hide it, the Curate of Llylisfern contrived by a dexterous piece of *legère-de-main*, that would not have discredited “The Wizard of the North,” or M. Robin, to seize Mary Penrhyn’s hand, and in imprinting a noiseless kiss upon it, murmured—

“Felice notte, a revederle tante cara !”

CHAPTER XXX.

SHOWING HOW THE CURATE-PEER REVENGES HIMSELF ON
THE REVEREND JABEZ JOWL. THE DEPARTURE.

To attempt to arrest the flight of happiness, the warp of whose wings are of the thinnest ether, and their weft of the rainbow’s lines, is about as wise as the idiot, who, the poet tells us, on coming to the river’s side, stayed waiting for the water to *pass on*, and so leave him a dry passage !

— “at ille
Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.”

For still the river runs on, and on, for ever ; and still Happiness eludes the grasp of those who would retain her ; and the brighter she has made the spot on which she has alighted for a moment, the darker and colder is the shadow cast by her receding form, as it soars upwards to its only abiding-place.

A month had elapsed since the news of Horace Lethbridge’s accession to his cousin’s titles and estates had reached Baron’s Court ; and the joy that seized upon all the young, and semi-detached young ladies of Flintshire and the three adjoining counties at this intelligence, was soon dispelled by the quickly succeeding news of his engagement to Mrs. Penrhyn ; or, as she was designated in the *County Chronicle*, by the aforesaid Spinsterocracy, “that designing governess of Sir Gregory Kempensfell’s.”

Meanwhile, so callous were the designing governess and the new peer to both the opinions and the *on dits* of that and the surrounding "ilks," that they never even bestowed a thought upon them, but were as happy, and sufficed as completely to themselves, as if the population of Paradise had never increased beyond the first man and woman, and that *they* had been that man and that woman. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" are world-old questions that still remain unanswered, as far as any affirmative demonstration on the part of either of those individuals goes; but the Rev. Jabez Jowl soon gave evidence that the parson *can* change, or rather doff his prejudices, however ingrained, when even a lord *temporal* is in the case, for he became to the *çi devant* poor curate of Llylisfern, not only civil, but servile.

Quia aliter esse non potuēt,

As the Roman Historian somewhat exaggeratedly expresses it, touching Cato's virtue; for though as we have seen, generally confining himself to "*Mosses*," and the *profits* of his fat living, yet in favour of the new Lord Aronby, the reverend gentleman seemed to be quite of the opinion of Melchior Canus, who, with regard to the strength of human testimony in some cases (which he did not believe to be infallible), defines it thus: "Those things are certain among men, which cannot be denied without obstinacy and folly." And in like manner, though Mr. Jowl by no means considered the unanimous testimony of three parishes to the Christian virtues of the curate of Llylisfern as infallible, yet he was quite willing to look upon, and bow down to, a peer of the realm, as one of "those things among men, which cannot be denied without obstinacy and folly." So, all unknown to himself, the reverend gentleman agreed with Aristotle, how unreasonable it is to expect the same kind of proof for everything; and consequently, though the most allopathic evidences had failed to convince him of the merits of an orthodox, liberal-minded curate, the most homœopathic globule of prudence had soon made him so sensible of those of a liberal-handed lord, that had the latter even thought fit to ask his daughter, Miss Kerenhappuch Jowl, in marriage, her sire would *not* have withheld his consent, more especially as she was far from being, like her namesake, Job's daughter, "the fairest woman in all the land."

But the curate peer, in "setting his house in order" before he quitted his little parish of Llylisfern for ever, continued to tread in the same sheep-walk among his fold that he had ever done; for, to use a mathematical expression, which better expresses our meaning than any other,—Christianity, as enjoined by Christ, being his *vectis*,* he never deviated from the height and line to which it had raised him; therefore the only difference that either his old or

* A *vectis*, in mathematics, is a lever supposed to be an inflexible right line, without any weight, and is accounted the first of the six powers.

young parishioners could perceive in him since his accession of worldly honors was, that with the will, had now come the power, to relieve their necessities; so that in most instances, the prayers and hopes he had before only taught them, he now realized. And in order to leave no score unsettled, he presented Mr. Jowl's eldest son with the living of Glenomera, worth about £600 a year, now in his gift. But though all these coals of fire heaped on the Rev. Jabez Jowl's head, by no means appeared even to singe his hair (probably because, from his love of what he called *spoiling the Egyptians*, he had insured that edifice by rubbing it with a preparation of asbestos), yet certain it is that they *did* kindle a very glowing gratitude in the heart of Jabez the younger, who felt it deeply, though he expressed it awkwardly, for had he not been brought up on true Anglo-Saxon, *noli me tangeri* principles (?), to religiously believe that—

“When a good manner appears, good sense retires.”

But the kind cordiality of his patron's manner, the hospitable and primitive way in which he went to the side-closet, in the room where the curate of Llylisfern was wont to keep his little store of port wine for the poor, and tent for the Sacrament, and with his own hand filled out two glasses of the former, that he might, as he said, drink the health of his new rector, and the delicate way in which he wrapped up advice in the pronoun “we,” and diluted censure in generalities, quite thawed the pent-up feelings in the poor young man's long conventionally ice-bound heart; and they at length came gushing and bounding forth in an irrepressible torrent.

“The fact is, Mr. Jowl,” said Lord Aronby, stirring the fire, “we English are rather too oysterish, and live too exclusively in our shells; and this *disease* of exclusiveness does not *always* engender pearls. Now what you and I must do at Glenomera is, to mix with, and cultivate *all* classes; for there is no use in *preaching* to the people unless we *practise with them*; and it is a great mistake to suppose that charity and Christian benevolence are things like coals and blankets, to be distributed *solely* among the poor; the often misnomered “rich” or upper classes are frequently with their broken hearts, and ship-wrecked fates, their padlocked sorrows, and their unlegislated-for moral wrongs, quite as great, and sometimes *far greater* objects for Christian charity and *active* sympathy, than are the lower orders, with their easily ministered-to material wants. It is true, that in selecting for our work these far more perilous plague-wards of private and, it may be, unsuspected wretchedness, our names are neither proclaimed from the minarets, nor echoed in the marts; but they are known in Heaven, and registered in God's Eternal Book. Depend upon it, my dear Sir, that to concentrate ourselves in self, is to corrode ourselves; whereas, to diffuse—that is, to spread ourselves out as much as

possible over the joys and sorrows of our fellow-creatures—is to bleach away, as much as may be, beneath the pure light of heaven, all our original blemishes and discolorations, and to perfect ourselves our mortal tissue, as far as it is here capable of being perfected.

“There is an old play of Cyrano de Bergerac’s called *The Mock Pedant*,” added he, lowering his voice, and looking towards the door with a waggish smile—“which, as the Rector of Baron’s Court is *not* here, I may perhaps venture to quote; wherein he says, ‘Men are vain, full of contempt, and consequently unjust, whenever they can be so with impunity. For which reason, all men imagine that on this globe, there is no part of it; in this part of the earth, no nation; in the nation, no province; in the province, no city; in the city, no society, comparable to *theirs*. They think themselves superior to all their acquaintance; and, step by step, surprise themselves into a secret persuasion that they are the first persons in the universe.’ Now the more we narrow our individual or our national sphere, the more strongly do we rivet the sharp pivot round which revolves this ridiculous and repulsive illusion; and all in avoiding others, we become objects to be assiduously shunned ourselves, as misanthropical solitaries. Now, on the contrary, look at a man of large sympathies; of a cosmopolite heart, and of a high intelligence. Unfettered by local and conventional prejudices, and thoroughly filtered from every dreg of selfishness, like Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, such a man is one of the viceroys of Providence, whose acts are his credentials. I do not for a moment presume to think that, do our best, we shall ever be able to equal this great good man, at Glenomera; but at all events, it will be no small merit if we endeavour to emulate him. And now, not to detain you longer, I will give you a line to Mitford, the steward at Glenomera Castle. I cannot tell you what sort of person he is, never having seen him myself yet; but as I understand my predecessor was perfectly satisfied with him, I have continued him in my service.”

And, as Lord Aronby turned to the writing-table to indite this letter to the steward, his grateful *protégé* could not help thinking, as he studied the real beauty of holiness that illumined his strikingly handsome and intellectual face, that his own heart and soul had expanded more, in his short intercourse with this practical but *unprofessing* Christian, than it had done in the whole four-and-twenty years he had been systematically, and periodically, listening to his father’s orthodox and ready-made spiritualities (?), although the reverend gentleman preserved, for the special use of his own family, an old Sternhold-and-Hopkins Prayer Book, bound in black leather, with brass clasps, which had belonged to an ancestor of his, one Hezekiah Ap Jowl; and in reading the Psalms of the day and evening, he always began at the beginning of this precious relic, so that after innumerable sonorous, not to say startling, “*ahems!*” the preamble of the family prayers invariably ran as fol-

low—the Rev. *Paterfamilias*, for the immediate warning and edification of his own household; not letting them off one letter of the “serious” title-page, but thundering out—

“AHM!”

“THE WHOLE BOOK

OF

PSALMS,

COLLECTED INTO ENGLISH METER

BY

THOMAS STERNHOLD, JOHN HOPKINS,

AND OTHERS.

Set forth and allowed to be sung in all Churches of all the people together before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, and also before and after sermons; and moreover in private houses, for their godly solace and comfort: laying apart all *ungodly songs and ballads, which tend only to the nourishing of vice and corrupting of youth.*

JAMES V. 13.

If any be afflicted let him pray; and if any be merry let him sing Psalms.

COLOS. iii. 16.

Let the word of God dwell plenteous in you, in all wisdom, teaching, and exhorting one another in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing unto the LORD with grace in your hearts.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR THE COMPANY OF STATIONERS.

MDCCV.”

The lines about songs and ballads tending only to the nourishment of vice and corruption of youth we have italicised, to shew the peculiar stress, emphasis, and importance, the reverend gentleman attached to them; while he finally wound up the exordium by imploring them to have grace in their *arts*, for so he always called hearts, no doubt thinking that, as we are told, the heart is deceitful above all things, ‘*arts*’ was the more correct reading.

Lord Aronby having finished, sealed, and directed the letter to the steward of Glenomera Castle, rose and gave it to the new incumbent of that living, saying, with a smile, “I have told Mitford to see that you have a warm reception at the vicarage; but I can give you no insight either into your parish or parishioners. As for me, Glenomera only begins with my own accession to it, though I *conclude* it *must* have been created before, upon Lucretius’s plan of supposing the pre-existence of the world to the Theban war—

‘—— Si nulla fuit genitalis origo
Terrarum et cœli, semperque æterna, fuere;
Cui supra bellum Thebanum et funera Trojæ,
Non alias alii quoque res ordinere Poetæ?’”

"It is utterly impossible for me," said the young man, with much emotion, as he took the letter, "to express the gratitude that I feel for your lordship's beneficence and generosity—a generosity all the greater for being so totally unexpected, and, I grieve to say, undeserved, at your hands."

"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." And gratitude is, for all blessings or benefits, alone due to Him; and the best way of evincing it is in all things doing His will, as far as in us lies; and when He sends us blessings, sharing them, as far as possible, with our less fortunate fellow-creatures as *His instruments*. I am very willing not only to accept, but to reciprocate, the goodwill you feel towards me. And now," added he, shaking his new vicar cordially by the hand, "farewell, and *do well*; I dare say I shall be at Glenomera as soon as you, for, having arranged all my affairs here, I shall go to London on Monday, and then into Herefordshire the week after——"

As he was still speaking, a groom, in the Kempenfelt livery, galloped past the window, and the next moment a note was brought to him. It was from Mary Penrhyn, and ran as follows:—

"For Heaven's sake come over immediately! I am so wretched—so agitated—I scarcely know what I write. Our dearest May is visibly fading, like a dissolving view, before my eyes. I have dreaded this a long time, and yet the blow stuns me, now that it has fallen. The old man's tears, the angel-smile of the young girl, put on already, are more than I can bear. Oh! Horace, I knew—I felt—that we were *too* happy, happier than mortals have a right to be; but this—this—is, indeed, paying too costly a price for it. Quick! quick! she wishes to receive the Sacrament from *you*."

"Ever your own,

"MARY."

Without a word, he seized his hat, and mounting the groom's horse, galloped back to Baron's Court. The sky was of a grey dull gloom, but not a breeze was stirring; as if Nature herself kept in her universal breath while that pure young spirit was passing upwards to its eternal home. As he rode, or rather shot like a flash of lightning, through the village, every cottage door was filled with mourners, old and young, the women with their aprons to their eyes, the men with folded arms, and the children with wide distended eyes, looking inquiringly up to both; for though May had risen that morning without any apparent increase of her insidious malady, yet suddenly, within the last two hours, her young life, like the flickerings of an expiring lamp, had given evidence that it was about to go out; and as the groom had passed through the village, on his way to Llylister, he had spread the sad tidings. On arriving at Baron's Court, the hall was deserted, and no servant greeted him; but, on going up the great staircase, he

found the gallery thronged, and not one, but was drowned in tears.

"In the amber breakfast-room, my lord," sobbed Grant, who had been sent out of the room from the loudness of her uncontrollable grief. He opened the door gently—noiselessly. In a high-backed chair reclined the shadowy form of the fair human blossom, who was now rapidly shedding her leaves of fleeting life, like those of the sweet fair flower whose name she bore. Her head was leaning on Mary Penrhyn's bosom—one small shadowy hand her grandfather held in both his; Linda, and Charley, were kneeling beside her—both drowned in tears; and poor aunt Charity for once forgot all her bodily ills, as she leant over the chair, braving bronchitis, without a shawl,—so totally absorbed was she in this great grief. The dying girl turned her eyes towards the new arrival as he entered, and murmured "Thank God!" He immediately knelt down beside her, as did they all, (with the exception of Mary Penrhyn, on whose bosom she still leant,) and began to read in his sweet, impressive, but now faltering voice, the Service for the Sick, adding, as was his wont, a short extempore prayer of his own, taking for his text the 25th Psalm, 16th verse—

"Turn Thee unto me and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted."

But *that* was for those who remained; and having told how only the pure in spirit shall see God, he cast a look full of hope and exultation at the departing angel, saying as he rose up—

"They shall be mine, saith the LORD of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."*

And then, all things having been placed ready for the Sacrament before his arrival, he administered it to her.

"You are cruel to mourn," said she faintly, trying to look round on them all, but finally resting her eyes, with their fast fading light, on her grandfather's pale, heart-stricken face; "very cruel when I am so happy."

"My child! my darling!" faltered the old man, "I mourn that I am such a loiterer. I should have gone before ——"

"Does not God know best? So *you* have always taught me," said she, pressing his hand, and then, after a pause, and another effort, she said—

"And Linda, dear Linda! and my little Charley,—they will comfort you, grand-papa, till we all meet again, where there is no more parting, no more tears. And Aunt Charity, ask her to forgive me for all I have ever done to displease her."

Sir Gregory drew her forward, she saw the movement of May's lips, she could not hear her words, and yet it seemed as if they had found their way to her heart, for she burst into a fresh paroxysm of tears. The dying girl then held out her hand to him who had

taught her better things than Hebrew—even the language of that Heaven to which she was now hastening—and, placing it within the hand of Mary Penrhyn, “God bless you both!” murmured she; “and as soon as I am gone, dearest Mrs. Penrhyn, there is a packet you will find in my desk; read it, and—and——” but here a slight spasm stopped her speech. When it had passed she once more opened her languid eyes, and said, “God bless you all!” These were her last words, and those deep, loving eyes, which had never opened but to bless or to be blessed, now closed for ever!

A piercing shriek escaped from Linda.

“May! May! come back!” cried she, passionately, or rather convulsively, clasping her sister’s lifeless form; “come back, for I cannot bear it!”

“Linda!” said the young clergyman—as the tears streamed down his own cheeks—forcibly drawing her away, “do you know that you are blasphemously contending with God? The burdens He imposes we *must* bear; the blows He deals we must *not* resist. Kneel down and pray with me, that He may fill up this great void with mercy; even His mercy, which is peace and hope. The peace which *none* can trouble, is now hers; let the hope that we may be worthy to rejoin her, be ours.”

“God bless you, my darling,” said the bereft old man, imprinting a last kiss on the pale beauty of that now rigid face; “it cannot be long, at all events, before *we* meet again.” And he took poor Charley up in his arms, who was not crying, only staring and cold, and looking exceedingly frightened; and as they left the room, the child clasped his grandfather silently round the neck, and his young golden hair mingled caressingly with the silver locks of the other, as he whispered—

“But will May *never* come back then?”

* * * * *

That night, Mary Penrhyn, with a sort of cruel self-torture, from a morbid feeling, as it were, to still commune with the gentle spirit that she so loved, opened the packet that May Egerton had left sealed up and directed to her. On doing so, she found a small ivory and sandal-wood Indian box, containing a long string of fine pear-shaped pearls, with a large emerald between each, which had belonged to Mrs. Egerton. Besides this, there was a small miniature, in a plain setting, which, to her great surprise, was a beautifully done copy of her own miniature of Harcourt. Bewildered and additionally distressed, it fell from her hands, and seeing a letter in poor May’s writing, addressed to herself, she hastily and tremblingly broke the seal. It began—

“Dearest Mrs. Penrhyn,

“Ever kind and indulgent, as you have been to me, after dear grand-papa, my best and tried councillor and friend, from whom I never had a secret but *one*, even if you blame and

laugh at my folly, as I know you will (if indeed you do not condemn it as a more serious fault), yet pity and forgive me; for this secret even *you* shall never know, till I am where reproof cannot, but pardon *may* reach me. It was all very wrong I fear, and very foolish I know; but indeed, I could not help it. How can I tell it you? but yes, when you read this, you cannot see either my blushes, my tears, or my regret. Here then is my confession. From the first day you came to us, I admired that picture of your son, for I thought it the most beautiful and loveable face I had ever seen; then you read out his letters as they came, and praised him incessantly, as the noblest and best of God's creatures. I prayed night and day that he might be preserved through all the dangers he was ever braving; first for your sake, and—and—then for my own; for I soon found I thought of nothing else; every night I cried myself to sleep, thinking over the horrid accounts of those dreadful battles we read of in the day, and fearing that every post might render them even more horrible to you and to me; in short, what had begun in dreams and castle-building, ended in becoming not only a part, but the chief part of my existence. I had always longed for a mother—I thought how I should like to be *your* daughter—a thousand times I was on the point of opening my heart to you, and telling you all my folly, but was deterred by the fear of the bad opinion it would give you of me; knowing what a disgust you had to anything like forwardness in a woman; and what would—what could you think of my loving a person, not only who did not care for me, but whom I had never seen. Still, I went on in my folly; and when we sent the frame of your miniature to London to be re-set, I kept the picture and copied it; and having obtained it, I wore it night and day, till the letter came filled with your son's love for Lady Florinda Andover, whom I had heard you say was *so* beautiful, and who is, as he says, so truly worthy of his love. Then it was, I for the first time was awakened to my worse than folly; for if an avalanche had fallen on me, I could not have felt more completely, more irremediably crushed; life and hope at once seemed to drop out of the framework of my existence, like some costly jewels from their setting, leaving nothing but a wide unsightly space. Everything became distasteful to me. I quarrelled with the very stars and flowers, for I used to fancy, silly fool that I was, that *he* looked at me through the one, and breathed on me through the other. But at length I roused myself; I took off his picture, and I put it away for ever; for it would have been a sin to love a man that was to be another woman's husband. Then, for dear grand-papa's sake, for my poor Linda's, and Charley's, and for yours, I would have given the world to have sprung back into my former self, and been the *May* I *had* been, with this folly buried for ever in my own heart; but it was too late. Then do not grieve for me, dearest Mrs. Penrhyn; for remember I am gone where sin and sorrow

are unknown; so only pity and forgive, but do not regret me. The pearls you will find with this were my poor mother's; give them to your son, and ask him to beg his beautiful Florinda to wear them on her wedding-day. Tell him that the donor prayed that they might both be happy; but do not tell him, or any one else, my folly; and, above all, do not tell it to poor darling grand-papa, as I know it would greatly add to his sorrow; but you may tell it to your second self; for I should greatly like my old master, if ever he leaves his fine castle to pay poor Llyliserf a visit in the spring of the year, to plant a sprig of my namesake flower on my grave, in the little old churchyard of dear Baron's Court, under the great yew-trees where I wish to be buried, instead of in the mausoleum, where I'm sure I could not even moulder freely; this branch of May will do for my epitaph. And now, good bye, and God bless you, dearest, kindest, and best Mrs. Penrhyn. I leave to dear Linda, grand-papa, and my little Charley, all the love and care you used to bestow on your

"Grateful and affectionate,

"MAY EGERTON.

"Baron's Court, Dec. 12th, 1855."

This letter, which was dated three days before her death, fell from Mary Penrhyn's hands.

"Oh!" cried she, in an agony of grief, falling upon her knees, "what a return to make for all the kindness I have received, and all the happiness I have found in this house, to be the indirect cause of that young angel's death. Could I only have suspected or supposed anything so improbable, and yet I *did* suspect there was something—how wrong, how stupid, how culpable of me not to have discovered this before it was too late! Idiot that I was, erecting barricades and fortifications against an imaginary foe, and blindly opening wide the citadel, and delivering up the keys to a real one. My God! my God! thy ways are not as our ways—Oh! vouchsafe us amid this labyrinth of thy mysterious miracles—the clue of submission." And so she continued to rave out prayers and supplications, till Miss Kempenfelt and Grant found her, and she was conveyed to bed in a high fever.

That day week all that remained of May Egerton was buried, according to her wish, beneath the old yew-tree's wide-spreading branches in Baron's Court churchyard; the deep, sweet, and now intensely sorrowful voice, that had so often taught her divine truths in their original language, reading the last beautiful service over her, for, as it may be supposed, her old master had not deserted her. It was impossible to say who was chief mourner—the very birds, from the chirping robin to the rueful raven, seemed to put in their claim; and nature had contributed a fitting winding sheet of pure and unsummed snow; while for the white marble urn

at the head, the Curate of Llylister had selected from his favourite, Joseph Snow, the following

INSCRIPTION.

"Not for the maiden sleeping here
Thy tears bestow, thy sorrows give;
Pass on, and weep with grief sincere
For those who innocence out-live.
Thrice happy who no sin e'er knew
But what baptismal grace has healed,
Whose nature Christ could scarce renew
Ere God by early death has sealed."

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN WHICH MR. PHIPPEN PROVES HIMSELF A FRIEND INDEED,
AND SIR TITANIFEROUS THOMPSON A FRIEND IN NEED;
AND LORD PENDARVIS RE-APPEARS ON THE HORIZON.

SEVEN months had passed since May Egerton had been consigned to her last resting-place; and not only in the ravings of delirium, but in the calm and recovered certainty of her irrevocable loss, Mary Penrhyn did not cease reproaching herself for what, in truth, she was in no other way the cause of, than by being the mother of Harcourt. And devoted as were Lord Aronby's affectionate and ceaseless attentions and solicitude, and urgent, and eloquent, as were his arguments and entreaties, the former could not succeed in banishing her regret; nor the latter in prevailing on her to consent to their marriage. For Baron's Court, that had been such a city of refuge, such a haven of happiness to her, she would not, she could not leave when it was converted into a house of mourning, and "a great and mighty shadow had fallen" upon a now vacant space in its once bright sphere, that never more could be filled. So Horace had nothing for it but to submit, which he did, with all the better grace that, in his secret soul, he would have despised her had she acted otherwise. So he was fain to pass his time in making preparations for the reception of its future mistress at Glenomera Castle, and in journeys to and fro between it and Baron's Court.

Meanwhile, great public changes, and chances had also taken place; a disgracefully ill-conducted war had been followed by an equally disgraceful and humiliating peace; but true to the one pole to which our national needle always points, scarcely was the ink dry, by which we bound ourselves to a future abject, indisputable, and wife-like obedience to the will and pleasure of Russia, than we

flew to scrape the pence off of the soldiers' wounds, by stopping the beggarly sixpence a-day, with which their country—no, their government—had so nobly (!) recompensed (?) them for sowing the hard and unequally fought fields of Inkerman, the Alma, and Balaklava, with their limbs, and irrigating the arid plains of the Crimea with their blood. It is true, the officers were even more splendidly rewarded with three pocket handkerchiefs to each battalion, of the best Spitalfields manufacture, hemmed at Windsor; and that one poor soldier, with *only* thirty-one wounds, had received the unheard-of, and certainly the unprecedented *largesse* (?) of a whole ten-pound note! which reminded one, though rather in another sense, of the critique on the cost of the pillar erected to the victories of the great Condé—

"Diantre ! ce n'est pas un sou par victoire."

Harcourt Penrhyn's wound, from having returned to his duty too soon, had opened again, so that he had to enjoy the honors of his purchased company and his gold-hilted sword, in the hospital at Scutari; but Florinda's letters, and the news of his mother's intended marriage, expedited his recovery, more even than medical skill and good nursing, though he was much indebted to the perfection of both. Yet still, he was one of the very last to remain in the Crimea, and it was not till a bright April morning, in 1856, that "The Esmeralda" might again have been seen dancing lightly, like an ocean *Coryphée*, on the sparkling sun-spangled waves in the roads of Sevastopol. But this time, Lord de Baskerville and Dr. Ross were alone on board. They had promised, the moment there was a certainty of peace, to return and convey Captain Penrhyn home, who, as it may be supposed, had no difficulty in obtaining a twelve-months' leave of absence for the recovery of his health. But Lady de Baskerville, who was furious at her daughter's confession of her engagement to her cousin Harcourt, positively forbid her returning with her brother; so that if we want to see her again we must go to Belgrave-square, upon whose gay-looking French blinds, an afternoon May sun, almost bright enough to have been a French sun, was now pouring down. On the opposite side of the square to Lady de Baskerville's house, basking, as it were, in the usual geniality of the weather, were Lord Pendarvis and Mr. Phippen, walking leisurely up and down. Lord Daventry, Lord Pendarvis's father, lived in the house out of which the former had just come. Somehow or other, on the principle, no doubt, of Fourier's *atomes crochus*, ever since Mr. Phippen had forwarded his very munificent subscription of five hundred pounds to Lord Pendarvis, for the purchase of the company and sword for Harcourt Penrhyn, they twain had become exceedingly intimate, and upon this particular morning Mr. Phippen, having been his own messenger, had just left a note with Lady de Baskerville's porter, and was returning leisurely to his quiet little hotel,

with his hands behind his back, and his hat slouched over his eyes rather more than usual, when he met Lord Pendarvis issuing from his father's house.

"My dear Sir," cried he, holding out his hand to Mr. Phippen, "you are the very man I wanted to see, we were just talking of you."

"Eh! 'egad! talk of the devil you know? or *vice versâ*, car vous le savez les extrêmes se touchent. A ce qu'il paraît pour le moment;" laughed Mr. Phippen, as Lord Pendarvis passed an arm through his.

"Do you know," said the latter, "I was just on my way to your office, to get an opinion which, in the affair in question, I should prefer to a lawyer's; I won't detain you five minutes."

"Five hours if you wish, for I have nothing particular to do to-day."

"The gist of the matter is this; I have an insurmountable horror of that Sir Titaniferous Thompson, a sort of instinctive warning horror, as poor Cooke had of Palmer's pills. Now the governor, on the contrary, seems positively bewitched by him, and is actually walking into his maw, as the poor little feathered fools are said to do into that of the rattlesnake. I fear this Thompson has already let him in for something considerable; but he has now a new iron in the fire, the Grand Duchy of Swilandsmokem Lead Mines, in which he wants Lord Daventry to take unlimited shares, and for which he wants him to become a director. How say you? Thou man of mines and merit, or mines of merit; advisable or not advisable."

"On no account let your father have anything to do with this swine, with this scheme," said Mr. Phippen, curtly.

"Thank goodness, he promised me that he would not conclude anything with Sir Titaniferous till I had taken your opinion on the subject, and that he would abide by it. Now do tell me in confidence, and I assure you it shall go no farther. Am I right in my conjecture, that the Brummagem baronet is by no means the Cæsar that he is supposed to be?"

"Well," said Mr. Phippen, with as much uncompromising diplomatic ambiguity as if he had graduated in Downing-street, or matriculated in a Protectionist Ministry of three whole days' duration; "he may be a man of capital."

"Oh, I understand," laughed Lord Pendarvis, "which does not at all imply that he is a capital fellow. Well 'pon my word, ours is a disgraceful state of society, when money, or the reputation of it, can make such men current in it; and when three such ruffianly, and ruffianly looking blackguards as that disgusting Duke of Twilglepon and Sir Janus Allpuff, and his little diplomatic *brouillon* of a brother, or the COURSE OF SIN BROTHERS, as they are aptly called, should figure at 'our virtuous Court.' (Vide the new-n - -)"

"Well, if they figured at it fifty times, the Court cannot confer any honor on them, they can only disgrace it, and do. But the career of that Course of Sin Brothers is really too cryingly infamous, even for our present era of perfectionized and triumphant vice."

"Yes, but don't you see what a *clever* dodge theirs has been? as 'clever' is the patent for every iniquity in these 'clever times'; the little unbottled abortion of a diplomat, married an old and ugly woman, one remove from an idiot, and into a family famed for the profligacy of its men, and inanity of its women, and he continues as scavenger and doer of dirty-work-extraordinary to the dear Whigs, while his 'clever' brother kicks his wife and children out of their home on a pittance insufficient to keep life and soul together, and not paying that, whenever he can invent the most extravagant pretext for so doing, and, having an infamous press-gang at his command, gets every ~~libel~~ and perjury that he chooses to forge, propagated and endorsed; and after having foamed a Liberal all his youth, as long as anything was to be got by it; he, in his old and landed propriety days, turns Protectionist; rats being naturally fond of corn. And so the Course of Sin Brothers between them, preserve their *own* balance of power, by doing dirty work for both parties, and such is our highly moral state of society (!) that of course, the hagocracy of female society, like old Lady Gorgon, with her three hundred a year pension, for having kept a Bureau de *Malfaisance* for such men, and the younger ladies in the same line, such as * * * &c., &c., &c., all tend to embellish our 'virtuous Court!' and render us eminently deserving of the title we arrogate to ourselves of—'a moral people!'

"When our morality appears to be constructed, much on the same plan as the pompous bill of fare of our English Hotels, which comprises *every* delicacy in *words*; but the moment one comes to grapple with *facts*, they all resolve into greasy mutton chops, and tough beef-steaks, and so the morality of our *haute volée* resolves itself into cant and hypocrisy, which one must either be a born fool, or a moral ostrich, even to swallow, let alone to digest."

"True," said Lord Pendarvis, "and it is the warp of this tissue of hypocrisy, and endless *seemings*, which makes us a nation of toadies, tuffhunters, and sycophants; for truly, as Sydney Smith says in one of his letters to Mrs. Meywell, 'Gaiety, English gaiety, is seldom come at lawfully. Friendship, or propriety, or principle, are sacrificed to obtain it, we cannot produce it without more effort than it is worth. Our destination is to look vacant, and to sit silent.'"

"Yes; but even Sydney Smith himself, noble, that is, pure and single-minded, and sound-hearted as the man was on the whole, was not free from the defilement which we have high authority for knowing the contact with pitch invariably engenders, and, perhaps fashionable pitch, more than any other. What I mean with regard

to Sydney Smith is, that I very much doubt, if Lady Holland had been the most outraged and injured wife in the world, and had been Mrs. Jackson, or Mrs. Thompson, or even one of the small and select family of the Smiths; and had run away from her husband, Mr. Thompson, *without* said Thompson having cut his throat as a sequel to that event, and had arrived in London with her paramour Cornet Trumpington, of the City Light Horse, or what the late Sir William Curtis used to condense into the S. L. O., and had been *All for Love, or the World well Lost*, in a second floor in Baker Street—I very much doubt I say, if Sydney Smith would have even visited her *himself*, much less have allowed his wife and daughters to do so, to say nothing of the supererogation of being proud of the acquaintance; but to be sure, had she been mistress to half-a-dozen men, the being mistress of Holland House would have quite altered the case, and our *moral* society is full of such gilded anomalies, it being in English, or rather in London society, the '*local habitation and the name*' that makes either virtue or vice in our commercial estimate; and even if we investigate the origin of a stir, or a *pretended* stir, about the reform of some crying injustice, we shall generally find that the *soi-disant* piece of magnanimous intrepidity has a corrupt source, just as Serjeant Talfourd's Custody of Infants' Bill, which might, by uninitiated innocents, have been supposed to be an act of justice to benefit a whole sex, was, in reality, a job to please a lady who had figured in a crim. con. with a Prime Minister, and has since enjoyed two retiring pensions from two different, of course *platonic*, admirers; but when the really outraged and bitterly aggrieved of the sex submitted their cases to him, the learned serjeant had not time to hear even the outline of them, which showed how genuine was the source of his bill and of his philanthropy; but then, to be sure, in the case of Sir Janus Allpuff's victim, for instance, it must be remembered that the learned Serjeant wrote plays, and that Sir Janus and his clique could either puff them or d—n them; so, of course, it was but natural that Sir Thomas Noon should prefer 'the noon of fame' to the latter risk, had the fates of all the women in Europe (always excepting that of the lady and the Premier) been thrown into the opposite balance; and I greatly suspect that the present pretended movement for pseudo justice for married women has a similar, and equally pure source, and that, for all the good any really injured women are likely to derive from it, they may as well sit quietly down with their outrages for the rest of their lives. Talking of that particular crim. con. of my Lord —, to give you some little idea of the sort, and altitude of infamy going on among the Gore House literary clique, which still exists in *full force*, although the temple, and the high priest, and priestess are no more; when Sir Janus Allpuff's victim wrote her first book for bread (which was just at that time), Colburn had refused it; but no sooner had she sold it to Bull than he sent that clever, versatile,

and unprincipled man, Dr. Maginn, down to where she was then living; to bribe her, by a large sum, to sell it to him, which, *not* being one of the Gore House clique, she of course refused to do. But, though he failed in his mission, the agreeable doctor remained to dinner, and gave her the whole history of how the wires were pulled upon that trial, telling her that Lord ——— had sent Sir ——— down to him, Dr. Maginn, four several times, on the night preceding it, to drive a bargain with him about getting the witness they were most afraid of out of the way, and that his (Dr. Maginn's) terms were a baronetcy (for baronetcies were cheap under the ——— administration) for one of his friends, a consulship for another, and five hundred pounds for himself. The two former were immediately acceded to, but the latter demand was resisted as long as possible, as his lordship by no means abounded in *sterling* qualities; but it was ultimately paid at the eleventh hour, when the *honorable* doctor, having value received, undertook the necessary preliminaries of tampering with the witness at a Westminster public-house, called the Chequers, and making him so drunk as to invalidate his evidence; and who so fit, if there is anything in example, to inculcate inebriety as was the literary doctor? But now comes the crowning infamy of the transaction, so worthy of that iniquitous clique. After having laughed over this pretty specimen, of his marketable *talents*, he showed Sir Janus's victim two articles that he had written; one for a Whig paper, making out the heroine of this crim. con. an injured angel of light; and another, with the *same* pen, and before the ink was dry on the first, for a Tory paper, dragging her through the filthiest mire, till the Red Lady of Babylon was white compared to her."

"Scoundrel!" muttered Mr. Phippen, "was not he the man who showed that Prussic-Acid Poetess, L. E. L.'s, disgraceful letters to him, all over London?"

"Yes; and prevented her marriage with another *literary 'gent.'* which one must always deplore as an invaluable chapter lost to natural history; as there is no anticipating what might have been the results of two persons of such total want of principle, and want of nose, being joined together in *unholy* matrimony. She was another choice specimen of that Gore House gang—a gang who concocted, and still concoct, every social and literary enormity in London. Sir Janus Allpuff's victim had befriended, and defended, this L. E. L. for nine years, thinking it utterly impossible that a girl of her age could be guilty of the infamies imputed to her, with that disgusting old satyr of the ———; and, pitying her forlorn position, her house was a home to this worthless creature, till, with her own eyes, she was convinced of her abandonment. However, when Sir Janus Allpuff got rid of his legal incumbrances, by turning his wife and legitimate children out of their home—this disgraceful and ungrateful creature transferred her toadyings and protestations of regard, to Sir Janus's mistress—a

creature whom he christened Mrs. Beaumont, and who, with this L. E. L., was invited down to Naughtworth, by Sir Janus's mother, the moment he had turned his wife and children out of their home. This, the soi-disant Mrs. Beaumont makes a public boast of; and, not content with this infamy, Sir Janus palms off this wretch as a widow, and himself as the guardian of his own bastards! and so gets this creature invited into country-houses to disseminate puffs of him, and calumnies of his legal victim. Nor is this all, the sister of this wretch, Beaumont—who had, till too old, always pursued the same loathsome trade as herself—the amiable Sir Janus established in a young ladies' boarding-school, in Kensington, where she was highly recommended by Sir Janus and my Lady Blessington!! Now this, you will allow, is even worse than the Handcock affair, as 'Clan' was content with the 'latch-key,' without turning his wife and her children out of their home, and hunting them through the world, or driving other persons' children into pollution by recommending them to a boarding-school kept by a prostitute."

"God bless my soul, how infamous! And has there not been a life written of that Lady Blessington?"

"Yes; by a Dr. Madden, of which nothing can exceed the bad taste, and the bare-faced fictions, unless it be the bad French, and the bare-faced humbug; for his account of my Lady Blessington's family is rather too ridiculous for even the puff-gulled and perjury-ridden British public to swallow; since every one, at least in Ireland, knows that her father kept a small pokey bookseller's shop in the town of Clonmel. But even in this most disgusting book, Mr. Thackeray's pre-eminence is made visible in his new version of *Les Pleurs D'Homère*; for my Lady Blessington's valet-de-chambre wrote her word, that at the sale '*M. Thackeray avait les larmes aux yeux.*' Now what on earth were the rest of the HUMBUGENCES comprising the Gore House clique about, that they did not turn on the water also, and set up a few tears in type."

"How disgraceful!" exclaimed Mr. Phippen; "and with such a *Bureau d'Infamie* as that Gore House going on, and all the myriad branch infamies contingent to it, we dare to call ourselves 'a moral people.'"

"Yes! the men who lead public opinion, and the women who lead society in England, will prove how moral we are. *Mais en revanche*, we have a million-elephant power of cant, humbug, and hypocrisy, on all subjects, in all places, and upon every event; and, as the natural result of this, a religious and political corruption, far exceeding what old writers tell us of the kingdom of Lao, except that with us our literati stand us in lieu of their TALOPOINS; the aforesaid literati, that is as much of it as is comprised in that execrable Gore House Clique, now calling itself 'the guild of literature,' being their own 'king,' whereas, the Talopoints, we are told, who were the priests of Lao, were only judged by the

king himself; and as they performed the outward ceremony of going to confession every month, thought themselves after, free to commit every abomination with impunity; as do that branch of our literati, provided they fire off a few fine sentiments in monthly serials, or magazines. Were the Talopoins convicted of using false money, they were sent back acquitted by *their* king, who only replied, that the seculars ought to make them greater presents. The most considerable persons in the country thought it a great honor to perform the meanest offices for the Talopoins, and none of them would wear a habit which had not been for some time worn by a Talopoin. And, so in like manner, with that particular clique; if any of them are convicted of passing base literary coin—that is, of palming off on the sapient public other authors' ideas and words as their own genuine currency—their 'king,' to wit, *their conclave selves*, fully acquit them, and tell the assified secular public that they ought, on the contrary, bestow even more admiration on them for their *originality*! And as the Laonians would not wear a garment which had not for some time been previously worn by their omnipotent Talopoins, so neither will the British public adopt an opinion, which has not for some time been propagated by this clique of Humbugences. You are fond of theatricals, Mr. Phippen,—I have thoughts of writing a comedy in five acts, entitled—*The Four Phases, or Full Moon*. Here are my *dramatis personæ*," added Lord Pendarvis, taking a sheet of paper out of his pocket-book:

"Mrs. St. Brummagem—a saint of that ware.

Mrs. Fitz. Pusey—her married daughter, a widow.

Charity Fitz Brummagem—her unmarried daughter.

Captain Fitz Brummagem—her son in the Guards.

Tim Clover—Captain Fitz Brummagem's groom.

The Rev. Anathema Hussfuss—The friend of the family.

Sir Lycurgus Shuffleborough.

Judas Trentelivre—a political friend.

Lord Joan—Patron to the above.

Parallelogram Fudge, Esq.—a philanthropist.

Mrs. Anacharsis Cloutts Muddle—a female specimen, and member of 'THE GREAT HUMAN FAMILY BORENICOFIA SOCIETY.'

Professor Wolfgang Von Gulltheffats—a German Professor.

Marstyle, Stiltall and Leadlump—Literary '*gents*,' his satellites and imitators.

Lady Di Courtman—with six marriageable, but still unmarried daughters.

Miss Celestina Shunman, their maiden Cousin, who, like Miss Martha Gwynn, whose epitaph figures at Doncaster—

— "Was so very pure within,
She burst the outward shell of sin,
And hatched herself a cherubim." }

The Marquis of Plutus—an unhappy Millionnaire, sprung for, sung at, ridden after, flowered, feathered and *teared*, tarlataned, smiled, and sighed at by Lady Di, and her six daughters."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Phippen; "when the full moon rises, your lordship may put me down for the two *avant scènes*, but look there at the real Simon Pure, the real Lord Plutus," added he, pointing to two carriages at Lady de Baskerville's door, into the first of which old Lord Celendon was being gingerly champeed by Lady de Baskerville's butler and two footmen; while the second carriage, which had just driven up, was that of Sir Titaniferous Thompson, which was waiting till that of the peer had moved on.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Lord Pendarvis, "if that charming lady, Florinda Andover, marries that old zöophite—for they say he has taken enough of Morrison's pills alone, to convert him into a market garden—I'll never believe in an angel face again, but bet on Gorgons from this out."

"I'll take the odds against the zöophite," laughed Mr. Phippen; "for there is not much bridegroom jauntiness about him."

"No, but with such a managing, *clever* mother as Lady de Baskerville, she may persuade the poor girl that the most agreeable dance in the world is the *grand père*, and that *he* is the best partner for it."

"If she succeeds," rejoined Mr. Phippen, gloomily, "the girl is not worth grieving over."

"Nevertheless," said Lord Pendarvis, "I should like to whisper in her ear some very good lines that I stumbled on lately, called—

"'BUILDING ON THE SAND.'

"'Tis well to woo, 'tis good to wed,
For so the world has done
Since myrtles grew, and roses blew,
And morning brought the sun.

"But have a care, ye young and fair,
Be sure ye pledge with truth;
Be certain that your love will wear
Beyond the days of youth.

"For, if ye give not heart for heart,
As well as hand for hand,
You'll find you've play'd the 'unwise' part,
And 'built upon the sand.'

"'Tis well to save, 'tis well to have,
A goodly store of gold,
And hold enough of shining stuff—
For Charity is cold.

"But place not all your hope and trust,
In what the deep mine brings;
We cannot live on yellow dust,
Unmixed with purer things.

"And he who piles up wealth alone,
Will often have to stand
Beside his coffer chest, and own
'Tis 'built upon the sand.'

"'Tis good to speak in kindly guise,
And soothe where'er we can;
Fair speech should bind the human mind,
And love link man to man.

"But stay not at the gentle words;
Let *deeds* with language dwell:
The one who pities starving birds,
Should scatter crumbs as well.

"The mercy that is warm and true,
Must lend a helping hand;
For those who *talk*, yet fail to *do*,
But 'build upon the sand.'"

"Aye, very true; and yet, 'egad, a modern writer has well remarked, that 'it is one of the singular facts of the present state of society that the qualities which in theory we hold to be most lovely and desirable, are precisely those, which in practice we treat with the greatest contumely and disdain.'"

"That such is the case, no one with eyes, and ears, and observation, can deny; but this is only more of the fungi, springing out of that accursed dry-rot of cant and hypocrisy, and thickly surrounding all the roots of the huge trunks of our social vices. Heartily do I join in Luttrell's prayer—

"Oh! that there might in England be
A duty on hypocrisy!
A tax on humbug—an excise,
A stamp on every man that canted!
No millions more—if *these* were granted—
Henceforward would be raised or wanted."

"Amen! And now (though I am in no hurry if you have anything more to say to me), I will wish you good morning; and I advise you to lose no time in cautioning Lord Daventry against entering into any fresh speculations with Sir Titaniferous Thompson; and—but this is strictly *entre nous*—if he banks with Dobbs, Thompson, and Dobbs, it might be quite as well, if he did not leave any very large amount in their hands. At the same time, of course he will not withdraw it in any way that can arouse their suspicions as to his doubts of their solvency; *vous comprenez; au sage un demi-mot* —?"

"Thank you, my dear Sir, a thousand times," said the young man, shaking Mr. Phippen cordially by the hand. "You may rely upon my neither betraying nor abusing your confidence."

And so saying, they parted; Mr. Phippen continuing his way back to Bond-street, and Lord Pendarvis re-entering his father's house, where his endeavours to dissuade Lord Daventry from

entering into Sir Titaniferous Thompson's speculation were **VERY SUCCESSFUL.**

Slowly and thoughtfully Sir Titaniferous Thompson ascended Lady de Baskerville's staircase; his head and eyes bent downwards, which totally divested him of the consequential strut which *parvenus*, poetasters, and villains, generally adopt to supply them, as they think, with that respect-compelling dignity, which Nature has denied them.

"Sir Titaniferous Thompson—my lady," said the groom of the chambers, throwing open the doors.

Lady de Baskerville, instead of being seated in her velvet *bergère*, half-reclining, after her usual languid, semi-regal fashion, was pacing up and down the room; her voice raised, her face flushed, and her whole manner much excited, while in her right hand she grasped, and occasionally shook, with tremulous passion, a much-crumpled letter.

Lady Florinda, on the contrary, looked like the embodied calm of a summer's evening, as she sat creating mimic flowers at an embroidery frame; for of all the illuminations for the peace, the one of happiness that now lit up that beautiful face of hers, was unquestionably the brightest; and, without even pretending to *clairvoyance*, any one passing at the back of her chair might have seen, besides the delicate tracery left by the shadows of the lace of her chemisette, on her slightly-heaving bosom, something very like a ship-letter between it and her stays.

"To think of such folly! such disobedience! such ingratitude!—and the expense I have been at to forward your happiness! your interests; and how——"

"Indeed, dear mamma," interrupted Florinda, "I am sorry you should have put yourself to any expense on my account; and, you know, every time you made dinner parties for Lord Celendon, I entreated you not to do so, for I told you from the first, I *never* would, or could, marry him."

"You told me! Well, now I tell you!" exclaimed the indignant Dowager, while the lightning of indignation coruscated from every feature, and the words seemed actually to hiss from her mouth, as if a bar of red-hot iron had suddenly been plunged into water. "Yes, I tell it you, and will never cease telling it you, that, with *my* consent, you never shall marry that penniless, upstart pauper—Harcourt Penrhyn!"

"Oh, mamma!" said the daughter, laying down her needle and thimble, and, for the first time, reflecting back a momentary flash of her mother's bitter indignation; "my cousin Harcourt is no upstart, he has already made for himself a name and a fame, that may well make us proud of being able to claim relationship with him; and you could not speak more slightly of him if he were an apothecary's boy, as grand-papa Penrhyn was; and though his

father was the son of an apothecary, yet his mother is of a far better, and older family than even the Andovers."

"This! to my face, insolent, ungrateful viper! Leave the room, Madam; and don't presume to add insolence to ingratitude."

Lady Florinda could not exactly see *what* she had to be grateful for, in her mother having jilted an honest man, to marry the honorable Palmytongue Andover, (for that much of the family history had come to her knowledge through Harcourt,) or in wanting to force her to do the same by marrying that fine modern edition of Methuselah, Lord Celendon; but being only too happy to get back to her own room, to re-read Harcourt's last letter, she instantly, and without another word, obeyed Lady de Baskerville's command, and was in the act of rising to do so, when the doors were thrown open, and Sir Titaniferous was announced. Florinda hastily retreated through another door, and left her mother to receive this living comment on her own plebeian origin, which she did with anything but a good grace.

"My dear Lady de Baskerville," said the bran-new baronet, extending his hand, for he never ventured on any more familiar address—"I fear I am intruding."

Nevertheless, like Paul Pry, all in hoping he did *not* intrude, he drew a chair, and persevered in doing so.

"Oh," cried the lady, flinging herself into, rather than seating herself in a fauteuil, "you are very happy, Sir Titaniferous, not to have any children."

"Expensive, certainly," rejoined that great man, flatly and financially, as he lifted up his coat-tails to prevent any of that crumpling, so obnoxious to Sybarites in broad cloth; "but," added he, with a mingled air of pedigree and patriotism (!), a pity too, when a title becomes extinct in an aristocratic country like ours—*à propos* (of titles perhaps?), I thought I saw Lord Celendon's carriage drive away as I got to your door. I hope all is going on well between him and my pretty cousin, and that we shall soon have a coronet the more in the family."

Lady de Baskerville, having hurled a visual thunderbolt at him for this ill-advised familiarity of the "*pretty cousin*," and "*the family*," now fairly burst into tears of irrepressible rage, as she exclaimed—

"Poor Lord Celendon has been grossly insulted this very morning;—refused, actually refused! by that silly and misguided girl, though the settlements he offered were magnificent, positively magnificent! a jointure of twenty-two thousand a year."

"And every prospect of speedily enjoying it," put in the practical Sir Titaniferous.

"Exactly what I have been telling her;—but I have only De Baskerville to thank for it all, his taking her in that shameful manner, (without even asking my leave,) to the Crimea, where the

very thing I most dreaded and disliked came to pass; they made the acquaintance of that Harcourt Penrhyn, and he had actually the impertinence to make love to, and propose for, Florinda."

The baronet raised his eyebrows, and shrugged his shoulders, as if he had suddenly heard that the three per cents. had fallen below zero; but in words, he had recourse to emollients, of which he appeared to have an hereditary knowledge. "No match for Lady Florinda Andover, certainly," said he, "but still, I must say, that Captain Penrhyn bids fair to rise rapidly in his profession; for dine where one will, one hears nothing but his praises, even at the best houses."

"Praises!" echoed his companion, pettishly kicking away the velvet *tabouret* at her feet, although it had not obtruded any opinion on the subject; "praises! can one live on praises? You, of all people in the world, ought to know, Sir Titaniferous, that one cannot."

Now, though Sir Titaniferous had never been in a position to try the experiment, he instantly, with theoretical perspicuity, decided upon its impracticability, and so replied—

"No, no, clearly not; only as stepping-stones: the praises and patronage of the great, you know, my dear Lady de Baskerville, must necessarily lead to preferment, and—and—in short, to substantial benefits."

"I know no such thing! On the contrary, it is patent that they never lead to anything, except to a ruinous expense that poor people cannot afford. Read the lives of Sheridan, Theodore Hook, Moore, and Sydney Smith. What did the great people with whom they dined, and for whom they jested, and jeopardized their scanty patrimonies, do for them? It is true that posterity is duly informed that 'Lady Lansdowne called, and left a tuber rose for Bessy,' and that 'Lady Holland brought Sydney Smith's children some presents from Paris; still, Sheridan, Theodore Hook, and Tommy Moore, died beggars; and Sydney Smith did *not* die a bishop; and if he also did not die a beggar, no thanks to the magnates, whom he feasted with wit and wisdom; and who thought they gave him value received in turtle and venison, as tavern-keeper's do for the golden guineas they receive for public dinners. No, no, Sir Titaniferous; I have not lived so long in the London world without knowing that the friendship (?) of the great will never take a sufficiently sterling shape to procure even salt, much less bread, for poverty—that is, for intellectual poverty. But all this only makes Lady Florinda's conduct the more unpardonable and abominable; and truly, it may well be said, that misfortunes never come singly; for, as if her rejection of Lord Celendon was not enough, and all the difficulties I have been plunged into, in my efforts to make the house agreeable to him, I, this morning, get a letter from that bearish old Mr. Phippen, reminding me that the

money he had advanced to me on my diamonds was now due, but kindly giving me two additional months to pay it in. To think that the ingratitude and disobedience of a daughter should place me in such a degraded position, as to put me under obligations to a man of that sort! For, had Flo' married Lord Celendon, as I fully intended she should, and as (if she had a spark of proper feeling in her) she *would* have done—out of her two thousand pounds a year pin-money, the first year of which she could not possibly want, I should have borrowed this money from her, for this Mr. Phippen, which is what I had all along calculated upon doing. Cannot you devise any plan to help me, Sir Titaniferous, you, who have such a genius for finance?" added the great lady, softening in her tone, and almost sycophantising in her manner, as she looked her ugly little ignoble nephew full in the face—"you who have been so *very successful*!"

"I sincerely wish, my dear Lady de Baskerville," said he, responding to the appeal by advancing his chair three inches nearer to hers, "that I *could* discharge this trifling debt for you myself immediately; but the fact is, I have just embarked, I may say, my *all* in a colossal enterprise (Sir Titaniferous always carefully avoided the word speculation), which I wished to *secure* before it got into the market, and thereby forestall the Rothschilds and Barings; and though, in a short time, it *cannot fail* to return me two hundred per cent., yet, for the moment, it leaves me as poor as a church mouse."

"Dear me!" sighed Lady de Baskerville, "I wish I had such chances of making money—how lucky you are, Sir Titaniferous."

"Prudent, only prudent, my dear aunt." The freedom of the latter word, he well knew, even if it excited her displeasure, was the best talisman he could have possibly used for inspiring her with confidence; for, though familiarity breeds contempt, wealth, he was perfectly aware, authorizes familiarity, or any other vice.

"Cannot you put *me* in the way of being prudent too?" rejoined she, almost coaxingly; "but I suppose you would despise a paltry couple of hundred pounds, or else I really would sell some bracelets or things to have a venture in your El Dorado."

The millionaire, of course, looked as if he *did* despise anything so impalpably minute as a brace of hundred pounds; but suddenly checking himself, as if the *look* had been involuntary, and his *feeling* was all benevolence and interest (irrespective of capital), he said, with a meditative air, to the accompaniment of a sigh—

"Unfortunately it requires thousands, before any commensurate advantage can be reaped."

"Ah! then there's an end of it; for thousands, alas! I have not."

Both were silent for a few seconds, when the baronet, placing

the fore-finger of his right hand on his forehead, suddenly exclaimed—

“I have it—the very thing!—it will not only make *your* fortune but Lady Florinda’s.”

“Oh! my dear Titaniferous!” (without the *Sir*) said she, clasping her hands in a sort of ecstasy meant to express both hope and gratitude, as she arose, and, with her own fair hands, let down the *portière* lest they should be overheard, “what *do* you mean?”

“Why, look here,” said he, making, with a pencil, some hasty and purely mythological sums of addition on the back of a letter, “Lady Florinda’s twenty thousand pounds, in four months, with the interest and compound interest, will just produce, if invested in this enterprise, forty thousand two hundred pounds.”

“Oh! but it is Flo’s fortune, you know, and I have no right to speculate with her money,” said the mother, drawing back with a sort of instinctive horror.

“My dear Lady de Baskerville, *I never speculate*,” said the nephew, with a contemptuous shrug, as he hastily replunged the letter, with the chimerical thousands on it, into his waistcoat pocket.

“Well, but,” rejoined the aunt, deliberating previous to being lost, “let us consult Florinda; she *may* be very glad to get such immense interest for her money.”

“Hush! not for the world!” said he, first raising the fore-finger of his right hand to the side of his nose, and then hastily buttoning up both his trouser-pockets, as if they already contained, not only the ‘open sesame,’ but the actual wealth, of this golden enterprise. ‘Not for the world; young persons are not to be trusted with such matters; and, indeed, in confiding it to your ladyship, I have been guilty of an indiscretion which, if known to the other directors, might be my ruin; but my anxiety to serve you, got the better of my prudence, and you must give me your solemn word of honor that you will *not* breathe this matter to mortal!’”

“You are very safe, for I don’t yet know what it is.”

“Ah! true,” smiled the millionaire, as if apparently recovering his serenity with his security; and then, knowing from experience that in angling for gudgeons, when you have baited the hook, the best way is to go away and leave it to be nibbled at, without, from being over anxious, casting your own shadow on the water, he looked at the time-piece, and exclaimed, suddenly rising, “Bless me! I shall be late, it wants a quarter to three, and I was to have met Mr. Jericho Jabber at a political meeting of our joint constituents in the Borough.”

“But—but”—hesitated Lady de Baskerville, replying to her own thoughts, “I have no right to invest Flo’s money without consulting her.”

“As her guardian, you have not only a right, but are in duty

bound to do what is most advantageous for her; and as she will not be of age for six months, only think what a thing it will be to double—nay, to more than double—her capital in four!”

“Ah! but——”

“Well, I must be off,” said the nephew, affecting express-train haste, as he held out one finger to his lady aunt, as *other* great people were in the habit of doing to him; and still Lady de Baskerville mused, till he had reached the door, when she said—

“Stay one moment; are you *quite* sure that the capital *will* be doubled?”

“My dear *aunt*, am I quite sure that *your* name is Dora? and that you are the Countess de Baskerville?”

She herself was so sure of both these facts, that she arrived at the conclusion that the monetary sequence was equally indisputable; and, moreover, Titaniferous *never speculated!* And yet, how Titaniferous *had* got on in the world! and when *that* is the case, one *must* be safe in embarking in the same boat with a person, even if that boat were steered by Charon, and being ferried across the Styx. And so the die was cast, and poor Florinda’s all staked!—with a swindler—who had been so **VERY SUCCESSFUL!**

“Then if I make up my mind to follow your advice, can you conclude the matter to-morrow, Sir Titaniferous?” said she, a shade paler than usual.

“To-day. *Now*, my dear Lady de Baskerville,” said the obliging baronet, returning, “if you will give me an order on your broker to sell out Lady Flo’s twenty thousand——”

And as her ladyship turned to a little *severe* and marquetric cabinet, which she unlocked, and from which she took a cheque-book, Sir Titaniferous drew from *his* pocket a sheaf of shares, and prospectuses, of the grand Duchy of Swillandsmokem Lead Mines, which most fortunately! and unaccountably(?) he happened to have with him. When Lady de Baskerville had filled in the required number, which was to put her and Florinda in possession of such *fabulous* wealth, the benevolent being, who was helping them to it, said—

“’Pon honor I have done rather an unfair thing, my dear aunt; for those shares that I have let *you* have—strictly speaking—belong to Lord Daventry; but blood is thicker than water, so *he* must only wait a little longer for his.”

And so saying, and generously to avoid any expression of his relative’s gratitude for thus favouring her, he made a precipitate retreat, ostensibly to reach in time the political meeting in the Borough; and as the *parvenu* M.P. descended the *parvenu* peeress’s Axminster-carpeted stairs to the clanging of the silver-sounding bell that announced his departure, once more his head was in the air, and Sir Titaniferous Thompson strutted, every inch a senator!—since of such materials our senators are now com-

posed. And yet one Père Millot—erst of the Academy of Dijon—expresses himself to the following effect, touching Montesquieu:—“Those rules of conduct, those maxims of government, which should be engraved on the thrones of kings, and on the hearts of every one invested with authority; is it not to a close study of men we owe them? Witness that illustrious patriot, that interpreter, that judge of the laws on whose tomb France, and all Europe, shed tears, but whose genius will ever be seen to instruct nations, tracing the plan of public happiness; that immortal writer, who abridged everything, who was for putting us upon *thinking*, as what we stand more in want of than reading. With what sagacity he had studied human nature! Travelling like Solon, meditating like Pythagoras, conversing like Plato, reading like Cicero, writing like Tacitus; his continued object was man. Men he studied and knew. The fertile seeds already are seen to germinate which *he* cast into the minds of the chiefs of nations and the rulers of empires. Let us gratefully reap the fruits.” And after refuting a dangerous paradox of Bayle, does he not also add—“The principles of Christianity, well engraved on the heart, would be infinitely stronger than the false honor of monarchies, the human virtues of republics, and the servile fear of despotic states, which is stronger than the three principles of political government laid down in the spirit of the laws.”

But what have we now of all this? Utilitarianism has converted all that is high, pure, good, and noble in human nature—all that *might* have been great—into a social, politico-commercial guano, for producing the greatest possible *quantities* of everything, without the slightest reference to *quality*; and to obtain this statistical guano, there has been entailed upon us an interminable Chancery suit of

Mammon *versus* Merit;

The infallible results of which are John Sadleirs, John Dean Pauls, William Palmers, Jericho Jabbers, Janus Allpuffs, and Titaniferous Thompsons; for as long as men can, with impunity, (as they now do,) violate every *private* virtue, they may, to forward their worldly ends, *assume*, but can never be capable of any *public* virtue; though this is only an additional reason, under our present system of private vice, and public clap-trap, why such men are all, and always, **VERY SUCCESSFUL!**

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN WHICH THE FAST MR. MONTAGUE SEDGEMORE ASTONISHES THE SLOW MR. TOM LEVENS, THE MORE SO, PERHAPS, BY CONVINCING HIM THAT AN APPARENT SLIGHT MAY OFTEN BE AN ACT OF REAL KINDNESS. MR. PHIPPEN LOSES A KEY, AND GAINS A WRINKLE.

HE! he! he! tittered Mr. Sedgemore. Hi! hi! hi! falsettoed Mr. Jones. Ha! ha! ha! contra-bassoed Mr. Smith, as the former, perched on his high office-stool within his desk, was, with one pen behind his ear, and another in hand, doing *croquis* of Miss Susannah Simmons upon a fly leaf of his ledger, while Messieurs Smith and Jones, in no way proud (though they *did* dine at Sir Titaniferous Thompson's, and figured at what they denominated "the West End") were "assisting" him by giggling at his performance. At an opposite desk sat Tom Levens making double entries, but neither of Simmons's, nor Susannah's, but of pounds, shillings, and pence, three per cent. consols, Russia, India, and Spanish bonds, with variations on other "fugitive pieces;" but, every now and then, he was obliged to have recourse to his pen-knife, from having made some slight error in his entry, evidently disturbed by the giggling going on opposite; and then, all in making the necessary erasures, he would suddenly knit his brow, as if, like poor Master Simeon, the second usher, in James White's rare merry story of *John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster*, he thought "that of all inferior noises, tittering was the most offensive;" for, as in the case of Simeon, his nerves were unequal to it, and he also opined that it "undermined that importance and respectability which were the corner-stones of his calling, and disconcerted the grave deportment which he thought it becoming to assume, and was altogether more than a man of his beard could well put up with." But Messieurs Smith and Jones prepared to depart, after a great deal of whispering had been added to the giggling, in which the words "Golden Pippin"—"leave it at the White Hart"—"Monday night," and "Cremorne" escaped, and flew over as far as Mr. Levens's desk; and there being no pen behind *his* ear to bayonet them back, they entered, and he distinctly heard them, but concluded that they merely referred to one of those frequent "larks," as Mr. Sedgemore called them (no doubt with reference to their *nocturnal* attributes), in which he was in the habit of indulging; and having found it impossible either to ensnare, or engage, his colleague to join in them, he had left off announcing any of his projects of pleasure to him. Messieurs

Smith and Jones, "the two *West End gents*," as Mr. Sedgemore denominated them, having taken their departure, after having made Mr. Levens a bow that almost amounted to impertinence from its mock respect, the latter quietly resumed his writing, and, for a few seconds, a profound silence reigned unbroken, save by the scratching of his pen, when all of a sudden Mr. Sedgemore, with his right hand to the side of his mouth, called out, in a stentorian voice, as if he had been hailing a man-of-war on the high seas—

"Hullo! Levens, my boy, now be sociable for once; and, as you seem to be so thick with him, and in his confidence, do unlock, and tell us what the *gov'nor* does so often down at Brentford—that is, *who* he goes to see there."

"I fear you must have a very low opinion of me, Sedgemore, to suppose that, even if I were cognizant of Mr. Phippen's movements, I should repay his great kindness to me by becoming a spy upon his actions. I leave spying and every other species of black-guardism to '*gentlemen*.' Such practices do not become men of my humble position; and, moreover, *you* go to Brentford quite as often as I do, and therefore are likely to know as much of what goes on there as me, as I understand you are constantly giving dinners at the '*White Hart*.'"

"Oh! I understand," said Mr. Sedgemore, winking his right eye, and spreading his hand out over his heart like "—— Browne," "*you* are wounded in the tenderest *pint*, eh?—*case* as *how* the dinners *ain't* given at the '*Four Alls*.' Well, I'm free to confess, as they say in Parliament, when they are going to conceal the truth in the best manner they can, that it *don't* look friendly that I should patronise the '*White Hart*' when the '*Four Alls*' is so near; but you, Levens, who have been a literary cove, and accustomed to do the articles in the moral and magnanimous line,—you ought to know better than to judge by appearances; and though you're not a fellow that one ever gets on with, on account of a sort of five-barred-gate grandity kind of manner that you have, yet, having a great respect for virtue and all that sort of thing, it is on account of the regard I have for you that I did *not* go to the '*Four Alls*.'"

Tom Levens raised his eyes, and looked a note of interrogation, but did not condescend to utter it.

"Ah! I see that confounded dot and carry one has dulled your capacity for figurative eloquence; but," added he, drawing a long narrow slip of blueish ruled paper out of his pocket, about a yard in length, and holding it up, "it is a true bill, for all that. Ahem! '*Montagu Sedgemore, Esq.*;' that reads devilish well. '*Montague Sedgemore, Esq., debtor to John Newcome*'—ahem! Well, I needn't read you the items. Dinners are always cold on paper, and wines flat. '*Total £16 8s. 4d.*' Now do you take?"

"Why, yes; that you must have been a very profitable customer to Mr. Newcome."

"Wrong for once. Guess again."

"I'm sure I can't guess what you had for so many pounds, if you mean that."

"No, I don't mean that, for now that's neither here nor there; but you see I have got this bill?"

"Yes."

"Well, don't you wish Mr. Newcome may get it? That's all. So now I hope you will have the decency to thank me for not having gone to the 'Four Alls';" and again, the fast Mr. Sedgemore winked his eye knowingly, as he replunged the bill back into his pocket.

"Good God! but that's swindling!" said Tom Levens, with unaffected horror.

"Ah! I believe that is the old-fashioned English name given to it in dictionaries," said Mr. Sedgemore, nonchalantly paring his nails with a pen-knife; "but we call it 'doing the flats'; and you know, my dear fellow, or you don't seem to know yet, but I have no doubt you will by and bye, that the opera of life is composed of flats, sharps, and *naturals*;" and he emphasized the last word, looking his companion pointedly, and somewhat impertinently, full in the face.

Tom Levens looked, and felt, exceedingly uncomfortable. He did not like the idea of turning informer against even a person of such lax morality as Mr. Sedgemore; still less did he like the idea of Mr. Phippen having such a person in his employment, and therefore, to a certain degree in his confidence; so as a *mezzo-terme*, he determined to watch him narrowly.

"Never look so glum, man; when I'm a millionaire I may relent, and pay Newcome. And Smith, and Jones, have put me on the scent of a gold-mine; so *that*, even, may come to pass sooner than you think. But *mum's* the word, for if the *guv'nor* gets wind of it, it will be no go."

"I think you had better take care what you are about, Sedgemore, and look before you leap; for, depend upon it, if there was anything likely to be so profitable, Mr. Phippen would know of it before either Mr. Smith or Jones could possibly do so."

"That shows how much *you* know about it. Why, Mr. Phippen is only a grub; Smith and Jones are all among the tip-top butterflies; the big-wigs of bullion dine constantly at Sir T'itaniferous Thompson's,—are intimate with the Barings, and are obliged to be quite cool to the Rothschilds, on account of the females of the family looking rabbis and synagogues at 'em, in the way of Levitical laws, marriage contracts, and ecclesiastical entanglements; and even Jericho Jabber has cast a jew's-eye at 'em, to give 'em places in the Treasury, when he comes into *hoffice* again."

"When he does, he may fairly promise to make them Premier, and Secretary-at-War; in short, anything—but honest men," said Levens.

"What! Suppose *you* don't think Smith and Jones have got talents enough for *office*."

"Oh, yes, I do! for a little goes a great way in England to qualify men for the management of state affairs; for England is not like China."

"How do you mean—not like China?"

"Why, the Chinese are so *exigeant* that they insist upon having two kinds of ministers: the one are the signing ministers, who grant audiences and sign papers; but the other are distinguished from these, as *the thinking ministers*, and have the care of forming projects, examining those who present them, and proposing such changes as times, and circumstances, require to be made in the administration. Now, it is very clear, that *we* neither have, nor exact, any such ministers as these in England, which very much simplifies the qualifications for office."

"Well, I don't wonder at your being hard upon them, for I know you were d—d ill used by those literary-politico coves.—and it is impossible to speak or think well of people who turn the screw too tight upon us."

"Why, Sedgemore, you are quite a philosopher, for *that's* exactly what Hobbes says,—that 'our hatred or love, is an effect of the good, or harm, we have received;' and he also adds, that 'among the savages, the only wicked man is the robust man; while in civilized states, the only wicked man is the man in power.'"

"Oh! if you begin talking of Hobbes, it's time to look after the kettle; and that reminds me, I am to tea at the Simmonses, and it only wants a quarter to six now," said Mr. Sedgemore, looking at the office-clock, and then adding, as he took down his hat off of a peg, and smoothed it with his elbow, "but I say Levens, 'though on pleasure I am bent, I have a frugal mind,' and though I do not patronise the 'Four Alls' for my *petty dinny's fang*,—as the *nobs* call 'em,—yet I am quite ready to save my clothes in '*domestic retirement*' sometimes, and do you a good turn into the bargain; so any day and night next week that you like to ask the *gw'nor* for a *oliday*, I'll stay and do *dooty* in your stead; only let me know before-hand. Monday would be most convenient to me, because *Susan*ner *hain't* booked me for *nothing* on that evening."

Tom Levens thanked him, coldly enough, and said he would give him due notice if he wanted to avail himself of his offer; and no sooner had Mr. Sedgemore's white hat appeared above the window as he passed up the street on his way to Miss Simmons's tea party, than he added, "What *can* he want to get me out of the way for? He must have some motive in it, as, for the whole twelve months that I have sat behind this desk he never before offered to take my place in order that I might have a holiday. I must, without informing him of my suspicions, give Dutton a hint to keep a sharp look-out."

Now it was customary for Tom Levens and Sedgemore to sleep alternate nights at the office in Threadneedle Street, and Dutton was a detective officer, who slept there every night.

Having formed this resolution, Levens closed his ledger, placed it within its own particular pigeon-hole, and then re-seated himself at the desk, took a sheet of paper, and began writing a letter, but had not written many lines before he seemed to require to refer to another; and, accordingly, he withdrew one from his bosom. But unless Mr. Phippen, in his numerous commercial transactions, had had dealings with some hair merchant in *La Haute Bretagne*, this could not have been from one of his correspondents, as it contained a long lock of soft-silken, dark brown hair which seemed to have a shade of sadness running through it; and such, in truth, *might* have been cast upon it from the tarlatan foliage of a widow's cap, under which it had long grown; for we may as well tell the truth at once: During the year that Tom Levens had been in Mr. Phippen's employment, that gentleman had had frequent occasion to send him on embassies, down to Hazeltree Cottage, thinking him a safe and trustworthy person so to do; he had also, as a plausible pretext for augmenting his stipend, deputed him to impart, by colloquial means, a thorough knowledge of French and Italian to Robert Chatterton, and to further officiate as *cornac* to the latter, in taking him country walks, whenever Christ's Hospital or Threadneedle Street did not require the presence of either. The consequence was, that the boy got exceedingly fond of him, and the mother naturally caught the infection, the first symptoms of which manifested themselves in a strong attack of gratitude; so that whenever Tom Levens appeared as *chargé d'affaires* from Mr. Phippen, at Hazeltree Cottage, there were always active preparations of a hospitable nature for his reception, till tea—however well it may grow in China—he began to think could only be *made* at Hazeltree Cottage. Cherries, strawberries, peas, plums, and flowers, in his *borné* experience, also confining their capabilities of perfection to the same locality; so that at length it fell out that, even when Mr. Phippen did *not* send him, this exemplary young man—so little did he spare himself, or grudge either time or trouble—would occasionally go down there of his own accord, either to bring a *bulletin* of Bob, who had walked six miles, and despatched twelve buns after it; or to inquire if Mrs. Chatterton and her mother might happen to have any message to Mr. Phippen, and be at a loss for a messenger; or if Sarah Nash wanted any more Glenfield starch, or Tim was getting too fat for his collar, and wanted any alteration of—all which commissions certainly *might* have been executed at Brentford; but of *course* not so well as in London. And then, it would also sometimes fall out, upon these impromptu visits of his to Hazeltree Cottage, that he would see the *silhouette* of a widow's cap at the window, as if the wearer was

actually expecting, and looking out for him, whereupon, poor Tom Levens's heart would turn Ethiopian Serenader, and thump out—

"I see her now! I see her now!

I see her at the window;

She looks so sweet, she's dress'd so neat,

I'd give my heart to win her."

Win her, it would appear in negro nepenthes, doing duty as rhyme to *window*. However, whatever was the rhyme, that apparition at the window was always the *reason* of terrible palpitations of the heart to poor Tom Levens; so much so indeed, that for several seconds after entering the cottage, he could not speak, which greatly alarmed the widow, who would bring him a glass of bright, clear, cold water, and look so earnestly into his face while he drank it, hoping that that would make him better, that on more than one occasion he had a great mind to tell her that he should never be better if she looked at him in that way, as it made the thumping at his heart return with double force, and was altogether as contradictory a mode of proceeding, as if a poacher were to attempt to lull a covey of partridges to sleep by discharging a double-barreled rifle amongst them. But it is a long lane that has no turning; and even *Lad-lane* is no exception to this rule. So one evening, the widow and Tom Levens were exchanging their *adieux* after tea; the sun going down and the moon rising up, and still he lingered; and whether it was the tea which had been unusually strong, or the cream that had been unusually thick, or the lock of dark-brown hair that looked unusually glossy, as it strayed out of bounds, or all and each of these separately, or combined, that did it; but Mr. Phippen's modest, moral, particularly civil clerk, became all of a sudden most unwarrantably meddling and morose; boldly declaring in the most abrupt manner that *he* thought a widow's cap the most unbecoming thing in creation, and if *he* could have *his way* *she* should not wear it another minute. And then the widow sighed, and so did he; and then he thought he could not do better than endeavour to prove to her, by logical demonstration, as he was in the habit of doing to Bob in other matters, that as two negatives make an affirmative, so two sighs, if properly commingled, make a kiss; and he having employed that electric-telegraph, there is no use in our loitering by the way. There were only Mr. and Mrs. Levens, senior, and Mr. Phippen, now to be consulted, and though both agreed that this was necessary, neither seemed in a hurry to consult them. Indeed, that evening was frittered away in tautological thanks on the part of Mrs. Chatterton, for the great care and kindness Mr. Levens had been good enough to show Robert. But Mr. Levens assured her, that the mere excursion-ticket intercourse of an occasional walk in the fields did not give sufficient scope for either, but that the moment he had shares in him, she would then see how that care and attention should be augmented. With regard to the lock

of dark-brown hair that has just been seen in the letter, *that* is easily accounted for; as where needle-work is about, there is always sure to be at least one pair of scissors, which is as convenient as a post-office, where love-making is going on; and so, that very same evening that refractory lock that would *not* wear a widow's cap was severed by Tom Levens with the very identical scissors that had cut out that cap—

SUCH IS RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE!

And from that day forth it was regularly transferred to *the last letter*. This last letter was now in progress of being answered; and though this was only Wednesday, the writer, with the wings of hope, soared into the far-future of four whole days and nights, and announced his advent for the following Sunday, at Hazeltree Cottage; but this was only the *motivo*, which was followed by divers variations, all in the same key, which, though thought exceedingly delightful by the person for whom they were composed, might not be equally so to every ear. At length the letter came to an end, because the paper had done so; and, that paper has its limits, is doubtless a wise provision of nature or art (?) instituted expressly with a view to bringing love-letters to a conclusion. Just as the writer was in the act of sealing this one, the office door opened, and Mr. Phippen made his appearance, surprised at seeing him at that unusual hour. Tom Levens hastily descended from his high stool, and inquired if he wanted anything.

"Eh? 'egad! yes, Levens; I can't imagine how I came to be so silly. Absence in young fellows like you is easily accounted for, and very excusable, but I am old enough to know better; and I must have left my watch either on the table here, or on the table in the dressing-closet, when I went to wash my hands and put on a clean neckcloth before I went away to-day."

"There is only one comfort, Sir," said Tom Levens, commencing his search on the large office table, at which Mr. Phippen always wrote, "if you left it anywhere here, it is safe. I only hope you may not have lost it in an omnibus."

"No, No, Tom; I walked home," said he, joining in the search; "and I only missed it when I wanted the Bramah key of my desk; for you know I wear that and the key of the iron safe here, to my watch-chain, and I have a perfect recollection of having taken out the watch and laid it down somewhere, but whether it was here, or in the next room, I can't exactly remember."

"It is not here, Sir," said Levens, taking up and shaking the last packet of papers, and then even looking in the waste-paper basket. "I'll go and look in the dressing-room."

And accordingly to the dressing-room they both went, and the portly watch and its appendages were soon discovered, lying on the top of a small chest of drawers, near the wash-hand stand.

"That's all right," cried Mr. Phippen, taking possession of it;

"but 'gad, as I am here, I may as well lock up these letters," added he, taking a packet out of his pocket; and they both returned into the office, and Mr. Phippen walked to the iron safe, and began unlocking it; but the key, which though a comparatively small one for so large a lock, generally opened with such ease, now refused to turn in the lock. Mr. Phippen took it out and examined the wards, when he discovered the impediment to consist in a small piece of wax which blocked up one of the interstices. "'Gad, that's odd too," said he, removing it, and placing it in a piece of paper which he put into his waistcoat pocket. "Have you been in the office ever since I left to-day, Levens?"

"Yes, Sir, except for about a quarter of an hour at four o'clock, when I went out to post some letters."

"And who did you leave here when you went to the post?"

"Sedgemore, Sir."

"Humph! and was he alone when you came back?"

"No, Sir, there were two persons with him, a Mr. Smith and a Mr. Jones."

"Who are they?"

"Well, I don't exactly know, Sir; but I believe they are friends of Sir Titaniferous Thompson."

"How the deuce did Sedgemore become acquainted with them?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Sir, but he appears to be very intimate with them?"

"Oh! he does, eh?" and Mr. Phippen pulled his right ear and mused for a few seconds, and then said—"I tell you what, Levens, I wish you'd put on your hat, take a cab and go to Chubbs's, and bring back a man *with* you directly, with several locks on the same plan as this one—that is, large triple or quadruple locks with small keys. 'Gad! I'll have this lock changed."

"I think you are right, Sir."

"Why do you suspect anything, Levens? 'Pon my life I begin to think you do."

"No, Sir; only I don't know what to make of that piece of wax being wedged between the wards of that key, for had it fallen accidentally from a candle, it would have been on the surface."

"Right, Tom; so it behoves me to *wax* cautious."

"Why, with so many papers and other things of such immense value, I think it does, Sir," said the former, as he put on his hat and left the office. In little more than half an hour he returned with a locksmith and an assortment of locks.

"You must take care, my man," said Mr. Phippen to the smith, "to put on a lock as different from the one you take off, as possible."

"This one, Sir, is quite as secure, if not more so than yours but it is on a totally different principle, and that key of your

lock would not even go in, much less turn in it," and the smith filed and screwed, and screwed and filed away at the ponderous lock, as expeditiously as possible, so that at the expiration of an hour he had taken off the old one and put on the new; which old lock, with the key, Mr. Phippen placed inside the safe, where he found all his deeds, documents, and other matters intact.

"Thank you, much obliged to you; here's half a-crown for yourself, and send me the bill of the lock."

"I return you many thanks, Sir," said the smith, gathering up his tools and basket, and pulling the fore-lock of his hair as he made his exit.

"Now, Tom," said Mr. Phippen, as he attached the new key to his watch-chain, "tell me what you suspect; for, for some time past, it has struck me that you had something on your mind."

But Tom Levens, who determined not to communicate his suspicions till they were converted into certainties, but to narrowly watch his fellow clerk on all occasions, merely replied, as he cast down his eyes, and advanced the tip of his right boot, with geometrical exactness, to a parallelogram in the pattern of the floor-cloth—

"Well, Sir, as you have been good enough to take sufficient interest in me to remark it, I *have* had something on my mind, but it only relates to my own affairs, Sir; for, with regard to yours, you may rely upon my vigilance in not losing sight of them night or day, and till I have something more than suspicions to go upon, I would rather keep *them* to myself."

"I've nothing to say against *that*, Tom, as I approve of it entirely," said Mr. Phippen, seating himself in his green morocco easy-chair, and leaning back in it, to show that he was in no hurry, but, with his usual kindness, was ready and willing to hear whatever concerned or affected the person addressing him.

"You are very good, Sir," said Tom Levens, hastily drawing back the point of his boot from that particular parallelogram, as if it had been a bait, and that something had suddenly nibbled at it. "Very good; and, indeed, but for your goodness to everybody, and—and—more particularly—to—to—somebody,——" but here he could get no farther, and fairly broke down, like some Parliamentary orator, who had suddenly forgotten one of the chief "*hits*," in his long and elaborately prepared impromptu speech.

"Oh!" said Mr. Phippen, with a malicious twinkle in his eye, as he plunged three of the fingers of both hands into his waistcoat pockets, instead of holding out a helping hand to his poor clerk, "so there is a *somebody* in the case? Well, Tom, every one knows their own affairs best; but I have always understood—however, mind you, I only go by hearsay—that those *somebodies*, when they get into a heart, do as much mischief as *nobody* in a house, and, in the same way too, all in the smashing and breaking line, and

turning everything topsy-turvy. But, if the question is not indiscreet, may I ask who the young lady is?"

"She—that—it—is not a young lady, Sir," stammered the clerk.

"Then what the deuce is it—not an old one I hope?"

"Oh! no, Sir—ne—no—its—its—she's——"

"All my fancy painted her," sang Mr. Phippen, waving his right hand in a theatrical manner, and finally placing it on his heart—"a touch of Alice Grey, eh?"

"No, Sir, not grey, only—only—a widow's cap, Sir," said Mr. Levens, with a sort of courage screwed to the sticking point desperation, and biting his lips cruelly, as his eyes wandered from one extreme angle of the floor to the other.

"Oh! *only* a widow's cap; well, that is both modest and economical; as I suppose, the 'doing up' of them, as Sarah Nash calls it, is not more than sixpence a week; whereas, had there been a widow in it, *that*, by rendering the enterprise considerably more expensive, might have made it imprudent. And where do you mean to take a band-box for it?"

The grave solemnity with which Mr. Phippen put this question, seemed at length to convey to Janet Chatterton's *fiancé* the incontrovertible fact that he was making a very ridiculous figure; so, taking the initiative in a faint laugh, he for a moment raised his eyes to Mr. Phippen and replied coherently—

"The fact is, Sir,—if you have no objection,—I—I—wish to marry Mrs. Chatterton?"

"I should think it would be more german to the matter, to ascertain that *she* had no objection, though it is very *prudent*, and *proper*, and *respectful*, and all that, I must say, of you, Tom, to consult *me* first. Very much so; and I'm sure the lady will like you all the better for it, as it proves you are not hurried away by any foolish impetuosity of feeling—a thing women never forgive; more especially widows," said Mr. Phippen, with one of his implacable smiles. "However, if you can get *her* consent, you shall have mine."

"Oh! thank you, Sir, a thousand times; I have *her* consent," exclaimed Mr. Levens, now quite lucidly.

"The deuce you have! then what, pray, becomes of all the honor and respect due to me in consulting me first—eh?"

"First, or last, Sir, my honor and respect for you, like hers, and like that of all who know you, can only increase every hour of my life."

"Ah! Sir," added the young man, as his eyes filled with tears, "it is well that there are not more like you on earth, or no one would want to go to heaven."

"Fie! fie! Tom; now that you are getting profane, I must go," said Mr. Phippen, rising and putting on his hat; "only mind, don't go and be married down at Brentford, or some out-of-the-way

country church, as if you were ashamed of the transaction (as so many people, God knows, have reason to be), for I have a great many marriages on hand for next month, and I should like them all to come off together, and after all the marriages are over, you can, as the Welsh parson said when he was puzzled by tying so many couples together—*sort yourselves*.

And without waiting for another word, Mr. Phippen slammed the door after him, and quitted the office.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BEING DEBARRED FROM THE BANDS IN THE PARKS, THOSE TWO HEATHENS, TOM LEVENS AND BOB CHATTERTON, ENJOY FIELD-SPORTS ON THE SABBATH, AFTER A FASHION OF THEIR OWN. MR. TWITCHER RE-APPEARS, AND THOUGH NOT AT CHURCH OR ON THE TREASURY-BENCHES, GIVES A NEW ILLUSTRATION OF "NON OMNIBUS DORMIO."

SUNDAY Morning at length came, and a beautiful morning it was, even in the still, sombre, conventicle-looking streets of the city of London; but here and there, glimpses of the blue sky were seen athwart the blackened roofs and chimneys of the gloomy houses, and the chime of church-bells swelled along the streets, and both sky, and bells, told of brighter, better, and happier things than the money-scraping traces the gnomes of commerce had left on all around.

Tom Levens had dressed himself with unusual care; and, issuing from Threadneedle-street, repaired to a neighbouring church, previous to calling for Bob at Christ's Hospital, as they both were to pass the day at Hazeltree Cottage.

Among the monkish legends is one, that an angel whipped St. Jerome for endeavouring to imitate Cicero's style; it is true, that the Abbé Cartaut adds, that it was only because he imitated him so badly. But certain it is, that our more orthodox Protestant divines are safe from flagellation on *either* count; and so Tom Levens thought, as he rolled out with the rest of the congregation from the city church, where he had been *soporificated* into finishing his morning's nap by the three-quarters of an hour verbal monotony of the preacher. But as he and young Chatterton pursued their way across the fields to Brentford, and the pressed grass returned a fragrant incense, the thanksgiving of both rose in a deep voluntary, upon its perfumed breath to the blue-boundless dome of God's Eternal temple. Perhaps one reason why Father le Compte and all the Jesuits assert that all men of letters are atheists, (without being far wrong,) is that such men are

mere earth-worms, always studying the works of men. Did they even through Nature's horn-book of leaves and flowers, summer skies, and summer airs, study those of God, they might be less "clever," but they would assuredly be more wise,—for then innocence, *not* evil, would be their good;—or it may be, that this neglect of the Deity, so often evinced by clever materialism, is but an inverse homage to Omnipotence, and that, like the inhabitants of the city of Bartam, they offer their first-fruits to the evil spirit, and *nothing* to the great God, who they say is good, and stands in no need of these offerings.

Be this as it may, Robert Chatterton and Tom Levens went on walking, and worshipping; the ritual of the boy being a merry laugh, and the orisons of the young man, a glowing heart, full of happy thoughts; till at length the former, after a rather arduous climb over a sweet-briar hedge, exclaimed, taking off his blue soup-plate, and passing his handkerchief over his face and forehead—

"Well, thank goodness I'm not a girl for life!"

"What do you mean, Bob?" laughed his companion.

"Why, look at these petticoats!" said he, holding up his heavy blue woollen garments, "they are so heavy, they catch in everything, and are as hot as a furnace besides."

"We shall soon get into the Hammersmith-road, and then we'll get into an omnibus."

And accordingly, in ten minutes more, they found themselves in that road, and hailed an omnibus that was rattling down from Kensington. Fortunately, it had but one inside-passenger, as the others preferred broiling on the roof. But that one was a distinguished one, being no less a personage than Newton Twitcher, Esq., M.P., for Muddle-cum-Fudge, who was *en route* to Chiswick, to pass the day with a rich maiden aunt, from whom he had expectations; for when does young England ever pass days, or even sacrifice minutes to maiden aunts *without expectations*? Mr. Twitcher's first move in finding himself in the promiscuous locality of a public conveyance, was always to twirl the capillary phantoms that *should* have been a moustache; and the next, to lose no time *à propos de bore*, or merely *de bottes*, in letting the natives know that he, Mr. Newton Twitcher, was a segment of the legislative wisdom of Great Britain. So on the present occasion, seeing the two intelligent faces before him, he first twirled Stubble No. One, and next Stubble No. Two, and then, addressing himself particularly to Tom Levens, said—

"What is your opinion of the peace? We in the House of Commons are much divided, both as to its advantages, and its duration."

"I cannot say," replied the other, without being at all awed by the high honor of speaking to a senator, "that I think much of it; there is everything in this particular peace, to remind one of

what Helvetius says, at least I think it is he who says, that a slight present good frequently inebriates a nation, till in its blindness it is apt to exclaim against the eminent genius, who in this slight present good, foresees many substantial evils. They imagine, that in branding him as a malcontent virtue punishes vice; whereas, generally it is only folly laughing at judgment. Moreover, we have plenty of warnings in history, if we would listen to them."

"How do you mean?" said Mr. Twitcher, pricking up his ears; for though not exactly the Turenne that could in a present young Churchill discover a future great Marlborough, yet, like most of the "clever" (?) rising men of the present day, he *had* an intuitive perception of his own interest; and seemed to divine that the intelligent-looking face before him *might* be made available for furnishing up speeches, perpetuating "Man in Paradise," or pushing him "in Parliament."

"How do mean?"

"You know, when Cato, the censor, whose sense exceeded his sagacity, joined the senate in determining to destroy Carthage, why did Scipio alone oppose the ruin of that city? but because he considered Carthage both as a rival worthy of Rome, and a dyke for opposing the torrent of vice and corruption breaking into Italy; and from the prescience taught by his knowledge of history, he predicted all the misfortunes that would befall Rome at the very moment when she erected her throne on the ruin of all the monarchies of the universe. He, in every country, saw a Sylla and a Marius, while the Romans could only perceive triumphal palms, and hear the shouts of victory! If the senate slighted Scipio's advice, it was because that then, as now, very few, by knowledge of the past, and *present*, see into the future. Again, at Marathon, Themistocles was the only man of all the Greeks who foresaw the fight of Salamine, and who, by exercising the Athenians in maritime affairs, prepared them for victory, instead of surprise and defeat. Unfortunately we have now no Themistocles, or if we have, he will not be listened to, 'charm he never so wisely,' as long as the jingling of a copper farthing, or a brass button, can echo from the Exchequer to the Legislature to drown his voice. It has been said, and truly said too, that 'civil wars are a misfortune to which we frequently owe great men;' but it would seem, that to great wealth in a state, and to the knowledge of all the arts by which that wealth may be increased, we frequently owe little men, and a vast number of them; but this, I suppose, only confirms the doctrine of Epicurus, that the world is made of atoms."

"Oh! do you think so?" said Mr. Twitcher, as if he thought himself an epitome of the best refutation of that assertion. "I think we have some very great men among us."

"Indeed! pray name them?"

Mr. Twitcher hummed and hawed, and thus brought to the test, did not appear to like to risk his veracity, or hazard his judgment, by naming one, and then added, for he always got his opinions ready-made from the newspapers, "Oh! ah! certainly we make great mistakes in legislation sometimes."

"So great, even in the mechanical part of it, that one occasionally wishes to see Caligula's remedy adopted."

"I forget what that was," said Mr. Twitcher, which was a modest way he had of stating the case when he did not know a thing.

"Why, he ordered Vespasian's robe to be dragged through the mire, for his neglecting to see that the streets were cleaned."

"You are severe," squeaked Mr. Twitcher, with a little wiry spasmodic laugh.

"No, but Caligula was; and even *he* was *sometimes* right."

"Well I do think," rejoined the sapient M.P. for Muddle-cum-Fudge, "that we *are* wrong to be so very thick with France; for I have no doubt Louis Napoleon will play us some slippery trick yet."

"The geographical position of France and England must compel them to coalesce, and the only wonder is, that the necessity has not come sooner. And I must say, if there ever *is* any very broad moral or social improvement in England, we shall import them, like our wines and our wit, from France; and, moreover, be indebted for a little additional wisdom to the sound head and telescopic mind that now rules the destinies of that great country, which never will let itself be ruled by a fool."

"So you are a great admirer of the present Emperor?"

"Very great; for I think nothing can be more applicable to him, than the four last lines of the old contemporary epigram, made on Oliver Cromwell—

* * * * *

'Par quel destin faut-il, par quelle étrange loi;
Qu' a tous ceux qui sont nés, pour porter la couronne
Ce soit l'usurpateur qui donne
L'exemple des vertus, qui doit avoir un roi!'"

"You speak French very well," squeaked Mr. Twitcher. "I myself am an *immense* linguist; French, I almost speak better than English," and here Mr. Twitcher dragged in two or three sentences of French, which, having none of the usual obliging good breeding of their nation, refused to corroborate what they had been summoned to attest; and, seeing that they were received only with a look of wonder, unflanked by admiration, he added, abruptly, what he thought would be at once a probe and a compliment,—“May I ask if you are in parliament?”

"Oh, dear, no;," smiled Tom Levens, caressing his right whisker, (for Mr. Phippen had hinted to him a wish that he

would shave off his moustaches, and any wound that he might have felt after so great a sacrifice, had long been more than healed, by hearing Mrs. Chatterton one day observe upon her son Robert's sighing for them on his eleventh birth-day, that she detested them,) "oh, dear, no! I was going to say, that I was not of a rank of life to be in parliament, but that does not hold good now-a-days; but at all events, I am neither sufficiently rich, nor sufficiently elastic about the conscience, to be in parliament."

Mr. Twitcher slightly knit his brows at this allusion to conscience, as if he thought mentioning such a thing to ears parliamentary, was almost as bad as mentioning a certain place to "ears polite;" but as he had so far caught the tone of the house, as to make his displeasure always subservient to his interest, he merely said—

"Perhaps, without being in parliament, you may like parliamentary employment? If so, I shall be very happy to procure you an engagement as amanuensis—or—or—private secretary to an M.P."

"You are very good, Sir; but I have a permanent engagement with a most excellent gentleman, whom I would rather serve for nothing, than any other for the highest emolument."

"Oh! indeed! is he in parliament?"

"No, Sir; I wish he were, for even half-a-dozen such good, honest, and uncompromising men might act as a sort of moral chloride of lime, to counteract the deleterious effects of that legislative malaria."

Mr. Twitcher had not been ten months in parliament, without having learnt that in England, words are *sensé*, to achieve, constitute, and to establish all things—from recompensing the bravest, and worst-cared for, army in the world—to negating the most damning proofs, or varnishing the most flagrant vices; and so he did not doubt, but, properly administered, with a due quantity of honey, they could not fail to gain over to his interests and mould to his purposes, a man who had confessed to being on the very lowest step of the social ladder, by saying that he was not of a rank in life to be in parliament; and therefore it was, that Mr. Twitcher, affecting to cast a look of mingled wonder and admiration at his *vis-à-vis*, said, in his blindest squeak—waving the question as to the amount of purification that a few honest men might produce on the atmosphere of St. Stephen's—

"You surprise me when you say that you are not in a sphere of life to be in parliament, for you appear to me to have quite sufficient talents to be so."

"That I do not in the least doubt, Sir," smiled Tom Levens, with a look of self-appreciation that must have been dropped by Mr. Jericho Jabber some night in the House of Commons, when he was busy selling his constituents and eating oranges, and probably picked up by Levens, while he was a reporter.

"That I do not in the least doubt, Sir," said the latter, "from all I saw and heard during the time I was a reporter; but although I have had a good education, too good, some persons might think, for a man of my class, though I of course do not think so; yet my father is only a publican, a calling that I chiefly regret, because it brings him, and also brought his son into the vortex of sinners."

"A publican!" responded Mr. Twitcher, his hopes suddenly rising like the price of beer after the Sunday Beer Bill,—“then a—a—a—really I almost feel inclined to use force—a—to—a—rescue your talents from so uncongenial a sphere—a—if—a—it were a—only on the principle of *men*, not *measures*,” twittered Mr. Twitcher, launching the first small rickety jest he had ever been *paterfamilias* to, the wit (?) of it consisting in a parliamentary train of thought; the “men” being an allusion to the man he was angling for; and the “measures” to the divers sized pewter flagons, which Mr. Levens, senior, used in his public-spirited calling.

“You are very good, Sir, but they *are* rescued, and more than rescued; for, with my present worthy and excellent employer, I am far happier than I could have deserved, or expected to be, or than I can ever hope to be again.”

“But I think I could open a career to you—a—where fame and wealth might be obtained; and no man is fool enough to reject the one, or philosopher enough to despise the other,” said Mr. Twitcher, with a look of owl-like profundity, that seemed to say *there*, *there’s* a nut that you will not easily get the kernel out of, and fling me back the shell.

But his companion only smiled and said—“As for fame, like happiness, she finds out those she wants, and flies those often, by whom she is most run after; but with regard to philosophy, I only pretend to as much of it, as verifies Seneca’s assertion, “*præstat opes sapientia, quas cuicunque, fecit supervænas dedit.*”

Mr. Twitcher’s experience and diplomacy were both at fault, for neither from “Man in Paradise” nor “Man in Parliament” could he recall any precedent for man, the species, being impervious to the allurements of forbidden fruit, and still less, for man, the genus tapster, quoting Seneca and eschewing sinecures; therefore, upon the whole, perhaps it was more a *tir-d’embarras* than a disappointment, to the member for Muddle-cum-Fudge. When at this juncture, the omnibus stopped at the lane which turns down to Chiswick, and Mr. Twitcher alighted to pursue his way on foot, to Virgin Thorn Lodge, the residence of his respected aunt, Miss Lucinda Twitcher, merely uttering a curt “Good morning” as he passed Tom Levens and young Chatterton.

“Oh! Mr. Levens, do let us get out here and walk the rest of the way,” said the boy, “it’s so hot, and that funny-looking gentleman, who has just got out, has set my whole face twitching as his

does; and what a funny voice he had; it was like the trumpet the man blows for Punch."

"For shame, Bob! you should speak more respectfully of a British Senator, for he said *we* in the House of Commons."

"That man in Parliament!" said the astonished and unsophisticated Bob.

"So he said."

"But he couldn't speak! I'm sure it would be quite ridiculous. We fellows at Christ's Hospital could do better than he could, I'm sure."

"Ah! my dear Bob, many men in Parliament who can't speak, and are equally, if not more, ridiculous, contrive to take up the time of the House, and waste the patience of the public, by talking for several hours together, because, having crammed and concocted a speech, they *must* let it explode in that particular *locale*."

"Let me pass, *please*," panted a stout gentleman in black, with diamond shirt-studs, and a dark-brown wig, parched and arid, like a capillary desert, without a single oily oasis throughout it, and who had just been "*assisted*" from the roof of the omnibus when it stopped to disgorge Mr. Twitcher. This *lasce passare* of his was addressed to Tom Levens, who had one foot out on the step of the vehicle, while the rest of his person remained still seated within, as he concluded his reply to Robert Chatterton.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said he, acceding to the request by instantly springing out into the dusty road, where, the next moment, he was followed by Bob; and the door of the omnibus, being slammed to, with the obligato "all right," it again rattled on, but had no sooner done so than young Chatterton espied an open letter, lying in the dust beside the causeway, and, picking it up, read the direction—

"To Daniel Hebblethwaite, Esq.,

"Hummums,

"Covent Garden."

"I wonder," said he, "if anybody from the top of the omnibus dropped this?"

"Yeez," said a loutish-looking individual, in a clean smock-frock; which, from both his hands being plunged into the pockets of a pair of brown corduroys, caused the said smock to fall in drapery on either side, though rather too scanty to be graceful; while a white wide-awake, and a red neck handkerchief adorned his upper man; a straw, that he twirled between his teeth, doing duty for a *tibia*, as he leant his broad shoulders against the sun-steeped bricks of a garden-wall.

"Yeez—oi—seed he drop from that 'ere stout gent's pocket; he as got into the 'bus off the thatch."

"Then why on earth did you not pick it up and give it to him; or, at least, tell him he had dropped it?" said Levens, angrily.

"Ha! ha! ha! that's a good 'un; I bain't a *poast*-man, to take arter other folk's letters."

"A specimen of free-born British independence and national amiability," shrugged Levens. "Here, Bob, run with it, and try and stop the omnibus." And Bob set off as fast as he could run, crying at the top of his voice, "Stop! Stop! Stop!" and brandishing the letter above his head, as a sort of signal, while the clown set up a horse-laugh, shewing all his teeth, diving down almost to the ground in his hilarity, and slapping his right thigh till the blows resounded, as he vociferated—

"Danged if that bain't *proime*! A *poast*-man in petticoats! we shall have the postesses in breeches next, I suppose."

But, after a long and ineffectual chase, Chatterton returned, panting and breathless. "No use," said he, "I could neither make them see nor hear, as the people outside had their backs turned to me."

As Levens took the letter which the boy held out to him, he thought he recognized the handwriting on the direction; and, after considering for a second or two, whose the writing resembled, he recollected that it was that of Sir Titaniferous Thompson. It was a large vulgar-looking letter, on blueish foreign post-paper, not in an envelope, but folded down at each side, as old-fashioned letters used to be; but as the address was in full—

"To Daniel Hibblethwaite, Esq.,

"Hummums,

"Covent Garden,"

Tom Levens, as they walked slowly on, was about to re-fold it in its original folds, determined to inclose it with a line, saying how he had found it, as soon as he reached Hazeltree Cottage, and put it in the post immediately; but in doing so, a strip of paper dropped from it.

"Hallo!" cried Bob, putting his foot on it, to prevent its blowing away; for although there was not much air, the strip was so narrow, and the paper so thin, that it had not sufficient specific gravity to keep itself on the ground.

"Hallo! I never saw such a ricketty concern as that letter; it keeps shedding its leaves in all directions, like an over-blown peony. What's this? '*Pass-words*: Golden Pippin's, for Monday; Cremonne, Tuesday; Waterloo-blue, Wednesday; Up the chimney, Thursday; Mind the bear, Friday; Don't mind the bull, Saturday; Bishop the band, Sunday.' Goodness! I declare here's something about you, Mr. Levens," said Chatterton, pausing in the perusal of this itinerary.

"Come, come, Bob, give me that paper," said Levens; "you should never read what is not addressed to, and therefore does not belong to, you."

But all in uttering this very proper advice to his young companion, as he replaced the slip of paper in the letter, and transferred

the latter to his pocket, the words "Golden Pippins," "Cremorne," followed by his own name at the end, and coupled with Sir Titaniferous' Thompson's writing, had jarred disagreeably on his ears, by awaking, or rather confirming, his former suspicions respecting Mr. Sedgemore and his associates; and he resolved at least to elucidate the matter, as far as reading that ambiguous strip of paper went, as soon as he could do so, without setting the boy at his side a bad example. But Bob, neither knowing nor caring about all this, now began to give himself up wholly to his anticipations of HOME, and the dissolving views his imagination was conjuring up, wondering if his mother would be at the gate to meet them; if his grandmother would be well enough to dine with them; if Sarah would have on the cap that he had bought for her with his own money, and his own taste! in St. Paul's Church Yard, where the cakes are more tempting even than the caps, and the toys of guns, cannons, fortresses, games of race-courses, and railways, with their aerial *pendants*, fire-balloons, more tempting than either; if Tim would come running out with that little fat, fast trot of his, which, but for the length of his tail and the loudness of his me—ew, would have made him look like a little mule; if the bees looked more comfortable, with their hives under wooden roofs; if there were any cherries ripe yet, and if there would be *plenty* of peas for dinner, with a thousand other "ifs," which formed the bright prismatic hues of Bob's vivid but impalpable *tableaux*. Generally, as far as the *first* of young Chatterton's ifs went, Mr. Levens' conjectural visions were in perfect unison with them; but on the present occasion, for a wonder, he was thinking more of his master than of his mistress; and it was not till they had turned down Hazeltree-lane, and that the former gave a bound on before, exclaiming—"I declare the very air is sweeter here!" that he came back into his former self sufficiently to think so too, as a balmy breath out of the woodbine hedge at that moment, gently stirred his cheek, and seemed as if it had come direct from Hazeltree Cottage, which much confirmed his opinion of its superior sweetness.

"There she is!" cried Robert, some ten minutes after; and on he ran, at the top of his speed, and was soon with his arms round his mother's neck, who was, as he *knew* she would be, standing at the garden-gate, looking out for them, while Mr. Levens, no doubt not approving of that sort of public *embrassades*, took off his hat in the most respectful manner, and rather slackened, than accelerated his pace, as he approached the haven of his hopes. Was it a sort of moral dropping anchor, or was it that he missed the Pharos by which he had so long steered—the widow's cap? Very likely the latter; for certain it is that it was not there, but in its stead was a little simple, but very becoming cap—becoming from its very simplicity—with a few knots of white ribbon—love-ribbon, it is true. So that, to borrow (with a slight variation) a quip of

poor Hood's, it did either "for the dear departed," or "the dear alive."

"Good morning, Mr. Levens," said the widow, holding out her hand, and blushing as she did so, as a pleasing relief to the dead white of the cap, "I hope you have not walked all the way in this terrible heat, which is more like August than June."

"Oh! no. We got into an omnibus at Hammersmith, and only got out at Chiswick; but the country is so delightful, especially just about here; for Robert and I agreed that the air was sweeter in this green lane than anywhere." And Mr. Levens accompanied this speech with a look full into the eyes of Robert's mother, that seemed to think it could not do better than follow the example of the air.

"How is grandmother?" asked the boy, not apparently noticing Mr. Levens's aerial plagiarisms.

"Indeed, dear, I am sorry to say she is not so well to-day. She has had a bad night," said his mother, as they all three entered the little glass-doored, wainscoted parlour, where the cloth was already laid, and which, warm as it was without, was cool and pleasant, from its bowery tracery of shadowing vine-leaves on either side.

"May I go up and see her?"

And although Mrs. Chatterton lost no great time in giving an affirmative reply to this request, still, so great was Mr. Levens's *empressement* to oblige his young friend, that before she could literally do so, he was on the point of granting him immediate permission, and had got so far as "Oh! yes," in the programme, till he suddenly recollected that this taking parental precedence of his mother was rather premature, so he terminated the "Oh! yes" with "this room is delightfully cool;" and still further to cover his retreat, upon espying through the glass door of one of the china closets three china baskets filled with cherries, strawberries, and gooseberries, he called Robert's attention to them by saying—

"Look here, Bob. Here's a splendidly satisfactory answer to your doubt, as to whether the cherries were ripe."

"Oh! mother, you are the best little woman in all the world, though not so little neither," cried he, again hugging her; but Robert Chatterton, though indisputably fond of fruit—and, if we must own it, though now eleven, still much addicted to gingerbread and all the small vices of confectionary, such as comfits and barley-sugar—was yet a boy of strong principles for his age; and so, without even venturing another look at the china closet, he darted into the passage on his way to the old lady's room, thus giving a practical evidence that his motto was grandmothers before gooseberries. But such was his precipitation that he nearly knocked Sarah over, who was going into the room with a plate of sliced cucumber, followed by Tim, mewling clamorously, who, from being led by the nose (as so many elderly gentlemen are who live entirely under petticoat government) from its perfume, had mistaken the

cucumber for smelts *au naturel*, which is the way feline gastronomes prefer them.

"I beg your pardon, Sarah," said Robert, catching her by both arms, in order to restore her equilibrium.

"Dear heart, Master Robert, is that you? I'm so glad to see you. You're looking uncommon well, to be sure; and I declare if you ain't grow'd agin, even since you was here last. And how is Mr. Phippen? and when is he coming down agin? for I do so long to see him. You don't *know* how I miss them dear old creaking boots of his, for all I've got your ma, and grandma, and Tim, and the clock, and the fruit, and the flowers, and the bees, and the birds—in short, more company and comfort than ever I had in my life before. Yet them dear old boots was the first sounds as ever seemed to say a kind thing to me; and goodness knows it was no fancy, for look at all they have done for me and for every one, and the place don't seem nat'ral without them; and that's the truth of it."

And here Sarah wiped her eyes with the corner of her apron, which gave Bob time to reply, in the most satisfactory manner, to her queries touching Mr. Phippen's health and approaching advent, and also an opportunity of seizing Tim, who, while his head was being kissed and his ears pulled, had the power of ascertaining that what he had pursued as a fish, when overtaken proved to be nothing but a cold, crude vegetable. Alas! poor Tim, thou art not the only one whose brightest dreams and most glowing calculations end in cold cucumbers, submerged in the vinegar of some sharp reality.

"Oh! thank you, Master Robert, for my new cap. You see I have got it on," said Sarah, stooping her head to show all its beauties, as soon as her mind had been set at rest about Mr. Phippen.

"But, Sarah, you've taken out the flowers, and I thought them the prettiest part of it."

"Thank you all the same, Master Robert, but it's not for the likes of me to wear artificials. Lor! a maid of all work looks like a Jack-in-the-green with such finery; but I've made the beautifullest bow-pots as ever you see with them, and I keeps 'em on the kitchen dresser, and they looks as nat'ral as can be; as you may believe when I tell you as they *hactually* took in a butterfly the other day, who flew in and lighted on 'em, and the poor thing fidgetted about, disappointed like, as if it could not make out why it could get no dinner off of 'em. But I must take in this here coocucumber. I've made you a famous large gooseberry pie, and a cake, and some cherry tarts, to take back to school with you, Master Robert," concluded she, as she opened the parlour door; and Robert, four steps at a time, cleared the flight of stairs *en route* to his grandmother's room.

Mr. Levens was a great favourite of Sarah's, as all gentlemen under his peculiar circumstances are sure to be, who, in wooing

the mistress, do not neglect the maid. So, disposing of the cucumber, she hoped he was not tired after his walk; and he complimented her on the becomingness of her cap, and also upon her domestic arrangements, so that, in her own mind, Sarah decided that *he was the nicest young man "as ever she see;"* for still the *beau ideal* of that sex remained, in *her* opinion, surmounted by a bay wig, and terminated in Hessian boots; and such a superstitious reverence, indeed, did she attach to the latter, that she had purchased, from an itinerant vender of objects of village *vertu*, such as yellow plaster of Paris parrots, and red and white pipe-clay cats, a beautiful pair of red china Hessians, with purple tassels, for holding matches, which always figured on the kitchen chimney-piece as her *Lares* and *Penates*. But this love of the beautiful did not prevent Sarah from having, like Mr. Twitcher, a *practical* phase in her character; and though she very sensibly thought much more of potatoes than of politics, and therefore troubled herself very little about the right man in the right place, she had a great notion of the right woman in the right place, as the brilliant cleanliness, comfort, order, and neatness of the little cottage evinced. And as she did not doubt that her mistress was quite capable of entertaining Mr. Levens "unassisted" by anybody, the natural sequence was that her own proper place was in the kitchen; and so, after having exchanged compliments with Mr. Levens, thither she returned, to see that the couple of very fine fat ducks, that were roasting at the fire, did not burn.

"Oh! I have had *such* a kind letter from dear good Mr. Phippen, giving his full consent to our marriage," blushed Janet Chatterton, when Sarah had left the room; "but he has taken a house in Upper Brook-street, and he is good enough to wish us to be married from there."

"But *when?*" inquired Mr. Levens, with a Threadneedle-street attention to chronological detail, which no doubt his habits of business had given him. Nevertheless, he seemed to have a natural genius for negotiating other transactions, not acquired either in Threadneedle-street or on the Stock Exchange; for, as he spoke, he approached his chair still nearer to the widow's, and, passing his arm round her waist, took one of her hands in his, and looked so earnestly into her eyes, that she was obliged to answer him, which she accordingly did, by saying, with a still deeper blush,

"Next month—the 15th of July."

Was that quiet, steady, impassable-looking clerk of Mr. Phippen's struck with sudden madness, that he should so seize that poor frail little woman beside him, and press her to his heart with such vehemence, that to a looker on, had any such been there, her suffocation must have appeared his sole aim and her inevitable end? No, he was not mad: it was only the "odoriferous earth," mingling as it ever does, sooner or later, with our common clay, the poetry of nature triumphing over its prose.

"I was one day in the bath," says Saadi, in his *Gulistan*, or *Empire of Roses*, "an odoriferous earth, an animated hand passed into mine. I asked, Art thou musk? art thou amber? It replied, I am but common earth, but I have had some connection with the rose—its beneficent virtue has penetrated me; without that, I should still be only common earth."

And so it was with Janet Chatterton and her companion: Neither were, in the abstract, handsome, though early sorrow had touched, with its hallowing grace, the features of both. But now, now, what a change seemed to have come over them! for they actually glowed and kindled into positive beauty. It was, that love was holding his feast of roses in their hearts, and their common clay, so touched, now breathed forth its musk and amber, as a divine incense for his altar.

But Time is no respecter of happiness. The happiest day, like the most miserable, comes to an end, and exactly at the same moment, neither a second sooner nor later—the only difference being that the happy day *seems* to pass away more quickly, though, as a compensation, it graves more archives on the memory; for in misery there is ever a monotony which leaves no record but one long "aching void." So at length the happy day at Hazeltree Cottage came to an end; for Tom Levens could not delay any longer the communicating his engagement to Mrs. Chatterton, to his parents, and asking their consent, which he did in the usual way—after having dispensed with it; but he determined to leave Bob as a hostage, to give him an excuse for returning to say "good night"—two words which all lovers appear to think are not valid unless repeated a thousand times. And the declining sun and lengthening shadows having warned him that he *must* get to his father's before dark, he set out for the "Four Alls," but had no sooner got to the end of the lane than, looking around him and seeing that there was no one in sight either way, he took from his pocket the letter directed "to Daniel Hebblethwaite," first reading the paper of "pass-words," beginning with "Golden Pippins" and "Cremorne," and ending with this sentence, "according to the day that that fellow Levens can be got out of the way."

"Oh, indeed!" said he, first turning the paper in all directions, and then, preparing to read the letter, he added, "I think I am justified in inquiring a little more into this matter, and seeing for what purpose I am to be got out of the way." The letter ran as follows—

"Friday, June 12th, 1856.

"Dear H—,

"It was unfortunate that I should not have been at home when you called this morning; and that I cannot go over to you to-night, nor to-morrow; as Lady G— is taking me to the Duchess of —'s breakfast at —, and for the next week, you know it is

advisable that *I* should be as much out of London as possible; still, it is cursedly unlucky that I cannot see you, as I hate trusting things of importance, between you, and I, and the post. However, I have a piece of news so good, that I must not delay communicating it to you. Crapes and pliers will *not* be wanted, for by the luckiest accident in the world, the old Golden Pippin left his key, the key, with his watch, on a chest of drawers last Monday, and Sedgemore took the impression in wax, and we have had a duplicate key made, so now we can do the job *quietly*, and at an *ordinary* hour, which will baffle all suspicion or research. The only *con-
tretemps* that can now possibly occur, will be that fellow Levens, with his gratitude and fidelity to his employer, and those sort of barricades being got out of the way; for whenever one wants to get rid of people they are sure to be as immoveable as the monument; but I inclose you a list of pass-words, which will provide for that contingency. Sedgemore is to offer his fellow clerk a holiday. As I do not wish the attempt to be made *before Monday* next, the 15th, on which *day and night* I shall be at Wimbledon, at Lord ——'s, Smith and Jones will call on Sedgemore *every day* next week; if Levens has consented to go out on Monday, Sedgemore will, in conversation with them, use the words "Golden Pippins;" if it is to be on Tuesday, he will bring in "Cremorne," and so on, throughout the week, as I inclose you the list; but whatever day it is to be, *they* will inclose you *the word* by post, that you may be *there*, to bring me *the deeds*, coupons, and whatever *Golden Pippins* may be with them. You must keep Sedgemore in play, with dinners at the White Hart, and other junkettings. He is a cheap rogue, easily springed with gentility, and its antipode, gin. Would that Smith and Jones' pretensions were as easily satisfied; however, we need not trouble ourselves about *them*, when once you, and I, have the needful, and The "Go-a-Head" has her steam up. As the Yankees, like all democrats in theory, are practically, very fond of lords, I have taken our passage, as Lord Irkmanchester, which, as you are aware, is the name of my *hereditary* landed property, while I have bestowed on you a *life* peerage only, as Lord Chiprassee, which I have no doubt will be as good a name to curry favour with in Broadway, as it is to flavour curry with in India.

"Ever yours,
"T. T."

"P. S.—Let Sedgemore have (of course as a great favour) six more shares in the Grand Duchy of Swillandsmokem Lead Mines; it is the *least* we can do for him. It costs us nothing — and will bring him the same! and the *experience* will be worth much, to a fellow of his shrewd, sharp *unprejudiced* turn of mind."

"Here's a precious hornet's nest of rascality that I have lighted upon, but, thank Heaven, I have done so," said Tom Levens, putting this charming epistle safely back into the side-pocket of his

coat. "You shall not be disappointed, or kept in suspense by my not going out to-morrow night, or, at least, *pretending* to do so, you patent villains!" added he, clenching his hand, and shaking it at the hazel-hedge, as if the whole gang had been concealed in it. And forthwith, his plans were taken. He resolved, in the first instance, to return and sleep at Threadneedle-street that night, although it was not his turn to do so, and say nothing to Mr. Phippen or anybody, but the next day—the memorable Monday—to affect to accept Mr. Sedgemore's obliging offer of a holiday, with alacrity, while, in reality, he resolved that very night to get three extra policemen besides Dutton, who should lie perdue about different parts of the office till the following evening; so as, at the proper juncture, to "assist" Mr. Sedgemore in entertaining his friends at his private theatricals of *The Iron Chest*. Thus resolved, he now quickened his pace towards his father's house, silently thanking God for having sent him so signal a Providence, through the medium of what men erroneously call "chance."

"Truly," thought the young man, as he came out opposite his father's house, still musing on the writer of the infamous letter he had just read, whom all men, from the greatest to the meanest, in the land, were bowing down to, and worshipping as the golden god of modern idolatry; "*Omne in præcipiti vitium stetit*;" and as the Psalmist says, 'Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?' " And he sighed, as he contrasted Sir Titaniferous Thompson and Phillip Phippen—the incarnations of the use, and the abuse, of wealth; and sighed more deeply still, as he thought of the universal Mammon-worship of this age and country. And yet, even Mammon-worship has *one* ground of defence; for, because gold *might* procure all that is good, people confound the type with the virtues typified, and so worship riches as if they were in *themselves* good. "That there have been so many false gods devised," says Tillotson, "is rather an argument that there *is* a true one than that there is none. There would be no *counterfeits* but for the sake of something that is *real*. For though all pretenders *seem* to be what they *really* are not, yet still they *pretend* to be something that *really is*; for to counterfeit, is to put on the likeness and appearances of some real excellency. There would be no *brass money*, if there were not good and lawful money. *Bristol Stones* would not pretend to be diamonds, if there never had been any diamonds. Those idols in Henry the Seventh's time (as Sir Francis Bacon calls them), *Lambert Simnell* and *Perkin Warbeck*, had never been set up, if there had not once been a real Plantagenet, and Duke of York. So the idols of the heathens, though they be set up to affront God, yet rather prove that there *is* one, than the contrary."

Let us then hope, that as hypocrisy has been designated the *homage which vice pays to virtue*, that the virtue still exists, but let us still further hope, that, "that *blest* Canaan *will* come at

* All vice stands upon a precipice.

last," when virtue will cease to receive, or, at all events, to accept such homage.

"Lawr, Tom! how you frightened me," said little fat Mrs. Levens, as she sat reading her Bible in the bar, like a tun, continued one of the goodly row of bright yellow ones, that figured there, save that *her* buff dress was surmounted by a very smart cap, with *vapeur*, or flame-coloured ribbon, in compliment to the incendiary five pounds Mr. Phippen had bestowed on her.

"I'm all over of a shake like a jelly," continued Mrs. Levens, returning her son's kiss, though it had come the wrong way, by his having gone to the back of her chair, and put his arms round her neck.

"I'm sorry for that, mother, for I certainly did not come to frighten you; on the contrary, I came to tell you very good news. But where's my father?"

"He's down by the river-side, smoking his pipe, but I'll send for him. Phœbe! run down to the water-side and tell your master as he's wanted *immejet*, but you needn't say as Mr. Tom is come; for as you took and surprised me, Tom, I don't see why he should not have a surprise too. Now what's the good news?" asked Mrs. Levens, laying down her Bible, smoothing her apron, and putting her hands in her pockets, as if she thought there could be no good news that did not relate to *them*. "Can it be as Mr. Phippen is a-going to take you into partnership?"

"No, but somebody else is. In short, mother, with your, and my father's consent, I'm going to be married."

"Married! Tom!" almost screamed Mrs. Levens, putting both hands up to her cap as if she thought, with a daughter-in-law "looming in the future," it was high time to take the ribbons, as well as the reins, into her own hands vigorously; "Married! well, I never! but don't let us talk of such things here, we shall be more to ourselves in No. 3." And accordingly, to No. 3 they adjourned, where Mr. Levens, thinking he had been summoned to a customer, instantly joined them.

"Hallo! Tom, is that you? You're late; why not have come to dinner? what will you take now? some of the Mecklenburg Lodge sherry?—eh? only say the word?"

"Nothing, Sir, thank you, I *have* dined; I only came to see you, and to ask your and my mother's——"

"Lawr! dear, would you believe it," broke in Mrs. Levens, "Tom's a going to *git* married!"

"Married!" echoed Mr. Levens, "married! to how much?"

"Aye, is it a fortin, Tom?" rejoined his mother, "for I'm sure, with the eddication you have had, you've every right to look for one."

"Yes," reiterated Mr. Levens, shaking his head, solemnly, as he seated and threw himself back in an arm-chair, "has she money, Tom? for marriage is a serious thing to them as is not used to it,

and often takes a deal to make one bear up under it; for it's a chance if two prizes find their way into one family, and you mustn't look to getting such a woman as your mother, Tom."

Tom didn't, and therefore looked humbly on the ground.

"Well, tell us who the gal is, Tom? I hope it ain't that 'errid Sally Spanker, of the Blue Boar, at Breniford; for though old Spanker does mean to give her five thousand pounds to her fortin, I'm sure such a forward hussy as *that* would be dear with ten, though I should hold her very cheap, even if she had twenty!" concluded Mrs. Levens, tossing her head with ineffable disdain.

"No, mother, it's not Miss Spanker, it's a very different person in every respect; it's—it's—a widow," said Tom, faintly, and with as culprit an air as if *he* had made her so.

"A widow!" screamed Mrs. Levens, in a sharp falsetto; "Lawr, Tom, you never could—you never can—"

"A widow! Tom! Tom! Tom!" deprecated Mr. Levens, in a Lablache-like basso; and then added, while Mrs. Levens was fanning herself with her handkerchief, quite overcome at this astounding intelligence, as she rapidly thought *she* did not want any more *weeds* in *their* bar. "It's a thing, Tom, as your mother has always warned even *me* against; for Thomas, says she to me, when we was only married a year, if so be as I should 'appen to die, promise me as you won't let nothink second-hand take my place; and if it is the will of the Almighty, as my dear babby—that was you, Tom—is to 'ave a step-mother, let it be one as is young and hinnecent, Thomas; but what hever you do, don't you marry a widow; for if she 'ave 'ad her way with her *fust 'usban*, she've got the knack of it, and will continue the business with *you*; and hif, hon the *contrairy*, *she* was screwed down, she'll be a fool, indeed, if she don't make you pay off the scores of her *fust* Bluebeard. So what *hever* you do, Thomas Levens, *don't* you go *for* to marry a widow! And if *I*, with all my *hesperence*, dare not venter on such a hornet's nest concern, to think of *you* rushing into it, Tom, with nothing to protect you but a little Latin and Greek *book larning*, and *such like*, which wouldn't be of no more use, under such circumstances, than a clay pipe and a tin sarcepan kiver would agin a tiger."

Mrs. Levens was visibly affected by the supposititious state of affairs, at the imaginary crisis of her own demise, even antedated as that melancholy possibility had been, and she now sobbed out—

"Oh, Tom! with your manners and *moustachers*, to think of your throwing on yourself away upon a one-and-nine-penny, as I calls them ere widow's caps, for so they may be seen ticketed up him hevery little trumpery shop winder. I do declare it's no better than marrying a ticket-of-leave."

As soon as poor Tom could obtain a hearing, amid the diatribes of his father and the denunciations of his mother, he defended his widow from the serious impeachment of wearing a one-and-nine-

penney cap of liberty; but what went much further to establish her respectability and fitness to be his wife, was his informing them that he did not want to bring her to the "Four Alls," as she had a home of her own, £200 a year, and, better than all, was a *protégée*, and great favourite of Mr. Phippen's.

"A home of her own, Tom!" said Mrs. Levens, drying her eyes, and calming her nerves.

"What, Tom!" cried Mr. Levens, "two hundred a year, and a great favourite of Mr. Phippen's," rising suddenly from his chair as if he had been galvanized, and buttoning his coat rapidly, as though he had been about to run a race, or clear a ditch, though the evening was intensely sultry. "Two hundred a year, Tom!" repeated he, now as rapidly *unbuttoning* his coat, and flinging it widely back, so as to show a large portion of his shirt-sleeves. "No doubt all things is hordered for the best; and I don't think as I 'ave hany right, Tom, to place hany *preventions* between you hand your wishes; though widows is *not* what I approve of, has a *gin'ral* rule," added Mr. Levens, holding out his hand with much portly *paterfamilias*-pathos to his son.

"I only 'ope Tom, that she is a prudent *ooman*, as will make your 'ome comfortable, hand you shan't 'ave no opposition from me," said Mrs. Levens, with the same amiable self-abnegation.

"I think, mother, that even *you* will own that she is all that any man could hope or wish for in a wife; and that I am indeed fortunate in getting such a one."

"And what's her name, Tom? And where does she live?"

He informed her, and Mrs. Levens said she would go and see her the next day, and make Levens go with her.

"Eh! my dear, eh! what's that you say I must do to-morrow?" asked Mr. Levens, who was now pacing up and down the room with both his hands plunged into his trouser-pockets, turning and jingling his money, and thinking what a famous thing it would be when Tom could do the same.

"Why, Mr. Levens, you are to go with me to Hazeltree Cottage to see Mrs. Chatterton, Tom's intended, to-morrow."

"Oh, ah! yes, certainly, of course, my dear. But, Tom," said Mr. Levens, suddenly stopping in his perambulations, and making a sort of right-about-face movement towards his son, "no incumbrances, I hope? Nothing in the ready-made line, eh?"

"Only one son, of eleven years old, Sir, whom, about a year and a half ago, Mr. Phippen kindly entered at Christ's Hospital."

"Well, come, *that* don't amount to an incumbrance; a blue coat don't come under the head of blue ruin," laughed Mr. Levens, much delighted at this professional jest.

But the moon had now lighted in the night, so Tom wished his parents good bye; he not a little delighted that the matter was so happily concluded, and *they* quite convinced, that Tom was even cleverer than they had always thought him. And so he was, for

there is nothing so clever, because so all-conquering, as happiness; and as he retraced his way to Hazeltree Cottage to pick up Bob, and announce to Janet his father and mother's intended visit on the morrow, it would have been difficult to tell which was the most buoyant, his heart or his step.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SHEWING HOW AMIABLY MR. SEDGEMORE SACRIFICES HIMSELF TO GIVE MR. LEVENS A HOLIDAY; AND THE UNGRATEFUL RETURN MR. LEVENS MAKES FOR SUCH KINDNESS; WHICH IS ALWAYS WHAT A FELLOW MEETS WITH, WHEN HE IS ASS ENOUGH TO DO A GOOD-NATURED THING; AND WHICH IS DOUBTLESS THE REASON WHY SO FEW FELLOWS EVER DO GOOD-NATURED THINGS. DANIEL HEBBLETHWAITE, ESQ., AND HIS DIAMOND STUDS, RESOLVE TO EXPLORE NEW WORLDS, AND SPARKLE IN ANOTHER HEMISPHERE.

As it may be supposed, Tom Levens was seated at his desk betimes on the following Monday morning; while, like a male Morgiana, he had prepared, not exactly enough boiling oil for the Forty Thieves, but had stowed away the four policemen, with sufficient provisions, for the day, in order to surprise the three "gents" in the evening, as agreeably as the faithful Morgiana had done the turbaned traitors. The office-clock had just struck ten, when Mr. Sedgemore made his appearance; he was not wont to be so punctual, more especially of a Monday morning; but Tom Levens, not to appear to remark upon this unusual diligence, kept his eyes bent upon his ledger, as if too intent upon what he was doing, to brook interruption; so, in reply to Mr. Sedgemore's banter, of—

"Ahem! punctuality begets confidence, and is the sure path to leisure and respect. Good morning, Levens."

"Morning," was the curt reply, and again the scratching of the pen was audible, and a silence of a quarter of an hour ensued; at the expiration of which Levens said aloud, closing the book, putting it away in its place, and taking down another, "Thank goodness *that's* done;" and then, as prior to opening the one before him, he began mending a pen, he added, "you were good enough to say the other day, Sedgemore, that you would take my place here, any day this week; now would it be inconvenient for you to do so this afternoon? Because I want to go down to Brentford, if you can make it convenient. I choose Monday, because Mr. Phippen seldom comes here of a Monday, or if he does, he don't stay, and so there is less to do; however, if to-day is inconvenient to you, I'll put it off to another day."

"All right, I'm your man. That's the time of day," said Mr. Sedgemore; "all I hope is, I shall not fall asleep on my post, for I've been making a night of it; and however game a fellow is, he must sleep sometimes, but I'm glad you have chosen to-day, as, to tell you the truth, I shall be glad of a quiet evening."

"Well, thank you, I hope you may have one," said Levens, Jesuitically, as he resumed his writing.

"What time do you start?" said Sedgemore, scarcely able to conceal his delight.

"Not before four; I don't think I can finish what I have to do before that time."

As he was still speaking, Mr. Phippen came into the office, and nodding a "good morning" to each of his clerks, without taking off his hat, seated himself at the table to write a letter, first having handed a cheque to Tom, saying, "Here, Levens, just be so good as to go to the bank with this; I want five hundred pounds, half in gold and half in notes, and make haste back, as I must be at the other end of the town by one."

Levens had written on a piece of paper, "Will you have the goodness, Sir, to be at your hotel, at between 5 and 6, P.M. to-day, as I have something of importance to communicate to you."

"T. L."

This paper he now gave Mr. Phippen in exchange for the cheque, saying out loud, "I believe, Sir, this is the bill of lading you asked me for last Wednesday."

"Yes, that's it," said Mr. Phippen, taking the hint, as he nodded at Levens, with a telegraphic look, and transferred the paper to his waistcoat-pocket.

No sooner had his fellow-clerk departed, than Mr. Sedgemore's assiduity to his own individual duties became extreme, as indeed it always was in Mr. Phippen's presence.

Meanwhile, the latter sat with his hat on, reading the letters that the morning's post had brought, till Levens returned with the money.

"You have counted it, Tom?"

"Yes, Sir, you will find it quite right, £250 in notes, tens and fives; and £250 in gold."

"Tom, indeed! and though I have been with him so much longer, the old codger never calls me Mun," thought Mr. Sedgemore, as he tried a pen with "S-u-s-a-n-n-a-h," separated but not disunited, like himself and Miss Simmons, when they were not at Cre-morne, or some other place of *pen-tee* resort together.

Mr. Phippen took four of the notes and a handful of the gold, without counting it, out of the bag, and then locked up the rest in the safe, which Mr. Sedgemore perceived with an inward chuckle, that had great difficulty in not bursting into a loud crow, such as he was in the habit of favouring his friends with, when he suited the word, or at least the voice, to the action, and strutted, cock-of-the-walk, at the Rosherville Gardens or Vauxhall.

"Well, now I'm going," said Mr. Phippen.

"If you have nothing particular for me to do to-day, Sir, I should be glad of a holiday this afternoon? and Sedgemore has been good enough to say, he will take my place," said Levens.

"By all means," said Mr. Phippen, as he put on his gloves, and left the office.

The quicksilver of Mr. Sedgemore's spirits began visibly, or rather audibly to rise, for one after another, the office was made vocal with his choice *repertoire* of comic songs, from *Billy Barlow* down to *The Literary Dustman* while Levens could not help occasionally stealing a glance at a long dark passage which led to Mr. Phippen's dressing-room, at the upper end of the office, and which was, one-half, panes of ground-glass that surmounted the wainscot; for along this passage it was, that the four policemen were lying perdue, as from it *they* could, through some of the little bright stars in the ground-glass, command a perfect view of all that took place in the office; while, had any one from thence even looked through these panes, they could not have seen into the passage, from which there was another egress into a back street. Just as Mr. Sedgemore was thumping on his desk with a ruler to imitate a hurricane of popular applause, and facetiously vociferating "*ancore*" to his own performance, a stifled sneeze was heard in the passage, but before Mr. Sedgemore had time to note it, Levens began sneezing in the most pertinacious manner, adding at the end of the *roulade*—

"Bless me! what a cold I have," and even while issuing this *bulletin* he gave another sneeze, and then said with a smile—"I suppose, Sedgemore, it is all those airs of yours that have given me cold."

"He! he! he! not bad for a bumpkin," and then Mr. Sedgemore, in the ganteest manner, knocked one of his thumb-nails against the other, which was a jocular method he had of denoting a homoeopathic modicum of praise. Here the door opened and Messieurs Jones and Smith made their appearance.

"Your most obedient, *gents*," said Jones, who always acted as spokesman, Smith being more in the silent and seidlitz-powder line, as he was much addicted to headaches and heartburn; and, therefore, had acquired a high reputation for *sense* among his associates, chiefly on account of his sedentary habits, while Jones (though Jones is a name not necessarily synonymous with genius) was the genius of this clique, as his was the ardent, restless spirit ever o'er leaping present duties for future triumphs; in short, Smith and Jones, or Jones and Smith—for, like poor Colonel Lincoln Stanhope's couplet on "Mistress Carnac," it is all the same, "whether forward or back"—were the impersonations of Helvetius's assertion, that "indolence is always the predominant quality in a man of sense; he has nothing of that activity of soul

by which a great man in power forms new springs for moving the world, or sows the seeds of future events; it is only to the man of passion, and him who thirsts after glory, that the book of futurity is open."

"Well, Sedgemore," said Jones, flinging himself into a chair, and elongating his feet, for Jones always set in for the whole morning when he came to see Sedgemore, "are you for 'The Princess's' to-night?—'Gracious Majesty' to be there, as Barnum would say."

"No, can't to-night," responded Sedgemore, shaking his head with as much official importance as if he, in his own person, had planned every blunder in the Crimean war; "work's the word, besides those *Golden Pippins* yesterday, though they looked so good, played up old gooseberry with me; by the bye, Smith, do you happen to have a seidlitz powder about you?"

And Smith, without uttering a word, produced from his coat-pocket, the blue and yellow card-box, and presented it to Mr. Sedgemore open, with the same sort of *en vuez-vous* air, if not exactly with the same grace, that an *Ceil de Bœuf Freloquet* might have offered his diamond *tabatière* to a brother *Talons rouge*.

"By Jove!" cried Jones, starting to his feet and seizing a pen, "what a head I have."

"Who ever doubted it," said Sedgemore, with a low bow; then thrusting his tongue into the corner of his cheek so as to imitate an attack of the mumps in one of its preliminary stages.

"Give me a sheet of paper, my dear fellow," continued Jones, apparently impervious to the compliment; and forthwith he commenced writing, but so soon was the letter concluded, that either his style was the *beau idéal* of terseness, or else he had possessed himself of that epistolary secret, peculiar to the stage, where long letters of love, or business, are indited with a single scratch of the pen; for of this one the direction was decidedly the longest part; but when it was directed and sealed, Jones announced that it was lucky he had remembered it, and would instantler go and post it.

"Well, as Sedgemore is busy to day," said Smith, who seldom spoke, but when he did, it was always to the purpose, "I think we had both better go; but we shall see you again in the course of the week," added he, replacing the box of seidlitz-powders in his pocket, but not before he had made the generous offer of leaving half its contents for Mr. Sedgemore's use; an offer, however, that was gratefully declined, for that gentleman was a great advocate of moderation — as far as seidlitz-powders, and the rest of the Pharmacopœia were concerned.

"Bye, bye," said Jones holding out one finger, winking his right eye, and by, at the same time, scratching the back of his left ear causing his hat to droop to the right à la *Tappageur*.

"Farewell! we shall meet again at Philip's eye, as the two side-curls of his late Majesty, Louis Philippe's wig used to say."

rejoined the facetious Mr. Sedgemore, and as soon as his friends had departed, he recommenced his musical explosions by roaring out, with a sort of cornet à piston accompaniment, managed by means of a sixpence—

"Oh! have you not heard of a story?

A wonderful story, and true;

If you have not, and will but attend,

It's a hundred to one but you do.

'Tis of a man of some note,

A comical outlandish fellow,

In Venice he lived, as 'tis wrote,

And his name it was Mr. Othello!

A gentleman there had a daughter,

With Othey she grew very mellow,

He wondered what passion had caught her;

She sighed for her Blackey, Othello.

Next, a young Captain—Cassio by luck

She saw, a gay dashing young fellow,

But his sword, and his gorget it stuck

In the gizzard of Mr. Othello.

For with Desdo he often took coffee, sir,

Till Othey one day very gruff,

Said, Desdy don't ask that e're officer;

But Cassio, to blind the old muff,

Affected the jolly and boisterous,

And, in order to seem up to snuff,

Treated Othey with beer at an oyster-house."

"What desecration!" said Levens, putting both hands to his ears, not able to stand it any longer.

"I never saw such a mar-plot as you are, Levens," said the cho-rister; "for I was *jist* agoing to *git* the *anketcher* ready, and bring in a *werdict* of '*save her right*' agin the young *ooman*; and it's too bad you can't let me have a little home-made fun, when I gave up going to the Princess's on your account."

"Oh, well! pray don't let me prevent your going," said the other, carelessly, "any other day will do for me as well."

"Not for the world! 'Most potent, grave, and reverend senior,' (though you are my junior) what Mun Sedgemore says, Mun Sedgemore *does*—touch my honor, touch my life; which means, '*taint gen-teel* to fish with a knife."

In similar brilliant *jeux d'esprit*, on the part of Mr. Sedgemore, and a profound silence on that of his companion, time rolled on till the office-clock struck four; when Levens rose, took down his hat, and put on his gloves.

"Well, good bye, Sedgemore," said he, "have you ordered your dinner, or shall I do it for you?"

"Thank you, I did order it from next door, as I came this morning, for half past four; but you might just as well tell them, as you go by, not to make a mistake, as they did the other day, but to be sure and let me have lobster sauce with the salmon, instead

I don't want any one's orders but my own."

"Very well," said Levens, as he closed the door after him, and left Mr. Sedgemore, not exactly *alone* in his glory.

No sooner had the former got into the street, and out of sight of Mr. Phippen's office, than he hailed a 'Hansom' with a good stout horse; and jumping into it, told the man he would give him an extra shilling, if he would drive as fast as possible to the Blenheim Hotel. Accordingly, as money proverbially makes the mare go, in an incredibly short space of time the cab-man pulled up at the door of that hotel.

"Mr. Phippen in?" asked Levens, of a waiter standing at the door, as he sprang from the 'Hansom,' and tossed the driver his fare.

"He is, Sir, but he's at dinner," replied the waiter, expanding his arms and napkin rather in a spread-eagle fashion, so as to impede, as it were, the onward progress of the impetuous visitor.

"What name shall I say, Sir?" still further retarded the waiter.

"Levens;—have the goodness to say that Mr. Levens would be glad to speak to Mr. Phippen for a moment, on particular business."

"Very good, Sir;" and up stairs the waiter went, by a sort of circular movement, placing his hand on the turn of the bannister, and swinging himself up the first flight, without troubling the intermediate stairs, which Tom Levens, however, did not disdain, but ascended in the ordinary way after him.

No sooner had the waiter announced his name, than Mr. Phippen rose from table, with his napkin tucked through one of his button-holes, as was his wont; and coming forward to meet him, said, "Have you dined, Tom?" and to the waiter, "lay another cover."

"You are very good, but not for me, Sir; I could not eat anything, I shall dine later."

And this was strictly true; for he felt such a pre-disposition to suffocation, from anxiety and excitement, that had he eaten even a bit of bread, it might have choked him; however, he gladly took a glass of water.

"I am sorry to interrupt you at dinner, Sir," said he, as soon as the waiter had withdrawn, "and indeed I had originally intended not to let you know anything about the matter, till it was over, and the scoundrels in custody; but, upon second thoughts, I decided that it might be more advisable that you yourself should be an eye-witness to what takes place, as you must naturally be the best judge of what ought to be done."

"Scoundrels! in custody! business over! What, Tom, have they been paying a visit to the iron chest already? 'Gad! it is, then, as I suspected."

"It is, Sir; but if you will go on with your dinner I will explain the whole affair to you."

"Good!" said Mr. Phippen, swallowing a glass of sherry; "now go on, Tom."

And the latter gave him a circumstantial detail of the manner in which Chatterton and he had found Sir Titaniferous Thompson's letter to Mr. Daniel Hebblethwaite, and then put it into his hand. Great were the variations of Mr. Phippen's countenance while he perused it, and when he had finished doing so, he held out his hand to Levens and said, in a voice, and with a look of mingled seriousness, exultation, and sorrow—

"You know not, Tom, the service you have rendered—not only to me, but to scores of others!"

"Thank God for it, Sir. Indeed, it is His mercy we must thank for it; for I am nothing but a humble agent in this providential intervention."

"True, Tom; and the postman is only an agent ignoring even his agency; still, if he brought us some news good, beyond our most sanguine expectations, we should bestow a little of our gratitude on him, and reward him."

"You, would, Sir," smiled the young man, "but I rather think that most persons in the present skin-flint, save-all times—especially the richer and higher in rank they were—would rather, on that very account, endeavour even to mulct him of his salary or his Christmas box."

"Well, Tom, now, what is your advice in this business? for there is no time to be lost."

"That was exactly what I thought, Sir, and therefore I took the liberty of acting at once—even before I consulted you;" and here he detailed the precautionary measures he had taken.

"Capital! nothing can be better! but it's this Hebblethwaite that we must, above all, get hold of, and compel into an ample confession of his iniquities; for he is evidently the Jonathan Wilde to that Blueskin, or rather blackskin, of a Thompson."

"Yes, Sir; but as it seems to me by the letter Mr. Jones wrote in such haste this morning, that it was, of course, the *Golden Pippin* despatch to summon him to the council of war, to be held in your office by this precious conclave to-night, so that he will not fail to be there, as his orders are to bring Sir Titaniferous the deeds, papers, &c., abstracted from your iron chest; therefore, what I came to suggest, Sir, was, that you should return with me without loss of time; go in the hack-way, and join Dutton and the rest of the detectives in the passage, so as to be present when the villains are taken in the fact."

"It's lucky, Tom," smiled Mr. Phippen as he rose and rang the bell, "that you are *only* a clerk in *my* office, for you have too good a head ever to have got on had you been a clerk in any of the Government offices. Be so good," added he, turning to the waiter, who now entered, "to bring me my hat and gloves, and send for a 'Hansom' immediately."

"One glass of wine, Tom, to drink to the success of our

"I would rather not, thank you. I'll drink to our victory when we've gained it."

"Well, perhaps you are right; cool courage is of no use without a cool head."

"Cab's at the door, Sir," announced the waiter, re-appearing.

And Mr. Phippen and Tom Levens lost no time in going down stairs and getting into it. "145, Oxford-street," said Mr. Phippen to the driver; but they had no sooner got quite clear of the hotel than he pulled the check, and upon the man's getting down, he told him whereabouts in Threadneedle-street to stop, which was, in fact, the entrance of an alley, leading to the back of his own offices, and, holding up half-a-crown, he added—

"That, for yourself, if you don't let the grass grow under the horse's feet, and so set him grazing."

As it was still broad day-light, with a bright setting sun when they arrived in Threadneedle-street, they hurried down the alley in question, and Levens knocking gently with his knuckles on the back-door of the office—the signal he had previously agreed upon with Dutton—the door was immediately opened by the latter, and stealthily, and noiselessly, Mr. Phippen and his clerk entered; for Levens, who had thought of everything, had provided some large list shoes to slip on over all their boots, so that the music of the Hessians, which Sarah Nash admired so much, was now entirely muffled, as their wearer, leaning with his hand on the wrist of his young companion, crept on to the ground-glass window, where the other three policemen were diligently watching the scene that was going on in the office, which was one of rather an uproarious nature; as from Mr. Phippen's large massive office-table the papers had been entirely cleared, and in their place was a goodly array of glasses and black bottles of every conceivable shape and size, some flat and square, proclaiming themselves of Dutch origin, others squat and rotund, evidently of West Indian parentage. At the head of the table, in Mr. Phippen's large green library-chair, was seated Daniel Hebblethwaite, Esq., with his diamond studs, and also at the head of the table, on Mr. Hebblethwaite's right hand, was seated Mr. Sedgemore, with a large paper star pinned to his left breast, and a piece of blue paper, such as wax-lights are generally enveloped in, cut into a broad strip and going diagonally across his waistcoat, as a sort of ribbon of the Garter for the million, while Smith and Jones were to be found (as they generally are) on either side.

"It was *dooced* unfortunate," said President Hebblethwaite (or, as the rest called him, Lord Chiprassee)—"*dooced* unfortunate my losing that letter. However, no great harm done, since here we are with the key, safe and snug," added he, taking a small key from his waistcoat pocket, the fac-simile of the one that had formerly belonged to Mr. Phippen's strong box, and holding it gingerly up between his finger and thumb; whereupon, Mr.

Sedgemore knocked on the table with his knuckles and cried, "Hear! hear! hear!"—as did Messieurs Smith and Jones—the latter saying, as he filled his glass with a limpid-looking fluid from a dropsical bottle before him, "Can't you give us a weed, Sedgemore?"

"Hush! not for the world! On no account must the office smell of tobacco; for no one would believe that burglars remained to smoke, with the fear of *being smoked*, before their eyes," cried President Hebblethwaite, putting up both his hands deprecatingly, with the palms turned to the company to let them see how clean they were.

"More especially," said Mr. Smith, who, as we before observed, seldom spoke, but when he did, always to the purpose—"more especially, as we cannot venture to do the job by daylight, for fear of any prying eyes from the street, or postman's knock, or any other interruption. And yet it must be done before nine, when Dutton always comes; and we have all the things to put back on this table and set the place in order, so that it may look like a parallel case to the robbery of Rogers's Bank some time ago, when everything was left intact, and the lock of the iron safe even, untampered with."

"Ditto," fiatished the second Daniel, holding up his glass to the light, and screwing one of his very ugly, small, round, black eyes tightly, as he looked at its contents through the other.

"Then *praps*," said Mr. Jones, "in default of cigars your lordship will favour us with a song?"

"You must ask my *vice* for *that*," rejoined the President pointing, with a jerk of his thumb, to Mr. Sedgemore.

"Ha! ha! ha!" guffawed Mr. Jones, "Your lordship is modest to speak of your vice, as if you had *but one*."

"*This Turk* he had one only *darter*," quoted Mr. Sedgemore, pointing at, and bowing to Hebblethwaite.

"Come, then, Sedgemore, give his lordship a parting stave, since, though you are both bound for the United States, you are going to travel different ways; as he goes with the Copper M.P. to America, in 'The Go-a-Head,' and you, with the fair Simmons, to Spanish Town, to look after that pretty little rum concern of his lordship's there, with the chance of future promotion in the other Indies, if you prove worthy of walking in his lordship's and the baronet's steps."

"Aye! he's down at Wimbledon, isn't he?—and so won't hear the good news till to-morrow," replied Sedgemore.

"Mum's the word," said Hebblethwaite, putting his finger to the side of his nose; "he's bespoken an indisposition at Lord —'s, and retired to his room, begging he may not be disturbed till he rings in the morning, which will give him time, by putting the key in his pocket, to run up to town, where he will wait for us at the Hummums, as Mr. Smith, till twelve, and then get back before there is any chance of his being missed."

At this intelligence, Mr. Phippen, who could hear as well as see everything, pressed Levens' arm, who nodded his head, as much as to say "Yes, *that's* well to know."

"By Jove! I've got an idea!" cried Sedgemore, suddenly thumping the table till all the glasses rattled again.

"NO! you can't surely mean *that*, Sedgemore?" said Mr. Jones, backing his chair, putting both his hands upon his knees, poking his head forward nearly into Sedgemore's face, opening his eyes to their fullest extent, and then his mouth, and staring at him in a manner of incredulous astonishment, that caused even Smith to roar; and after the roar had subsided, he added—"Come then, let us hear the infant phenomenon."

"Why, now look here," said Sedgemore, "neither the governor, nor Long-shanks, (here Levens put out his leg and pointed to it with a bow, as much as to say "*that's* me,") know Mr. Hebblethwaite's hand-writing; suppose then he were to take and write upon a piece of paper, this paragraph—

"'You can easily put something in Sedgemore's beer at dinner, to give him a few hours' comfortable sleep; and having got leave to go out; Levens, you know *you* will never be suspected of having let us in, any more than of having taken off the impression of the —' Don't finish the word, but burn the paper along both ends, and put it in the grate, at the top near the hob, where it can't fail to be seen, and will look as if the flame had gone out that had been intended to consume it. Now do you understand my idea?"

"Capital!" cried the other three, while Mr. Phippen was busy doubling, and shaking both his fists at them, behind the ground glass, and muttering "Scoundrels!" till Tom Levens twitched the old gentleman's voluminous silk handkerchief out of his pocket, and, in great trepidation, placed it before his mouth.

No sooner said, than done. The villanous epistolary fragment was soon indited, artistically burnt along the sides, by a meandering flame with a taper, and placed, as suggested, near the hob.

"As all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, now let's have a song," cried Jones, rubbing his hands.

"Well, what is it to be?" asked Mr. Sedgemore, replenishing his glass.

"Oh! anything *hamatory*, or *hanacrehontic*, or, if you like it better, something swampy and sentimental, in Smith's line—all about '*arts* betrayed and blighted '*opes*."

"Out with the *venomous* hanimals, then; get ready your *wipers*, *hand* prepare for hydraulics," said Mr. Sedgemore, clearing his throat; after which obligato prelude he began twirling his thumbs, turning up his eyes, and, in a most lachrymose manner, intoned with the true nasal conventicle twang the following charming effusion:

"I loved a maid, called Betty Wade,
So tall and perpendicular;

Her neck and waist did suit my taste,
In ev-er-y par-ticular.

Her roguish eye, did seem to cry,
If you would win me, follow, man;
So at her feet, I sigh'd, "Oh sweet!
Pity Mr. Solomon, Mr. Solomon!
Pity Mr. Solomon! (Chorus)

A grenadier, as you shall hear,
Her sweetheart was unknown to me;
And the next time I met, my sweet Bet,
She was as a stone to me.

I bought a fine new valentine, "
Eighteen-pence I paid for it;
Some verses new, to my love true,
I my-self had made for it.

These verse said, Dear Betty Wade,
Though he is a fiercer, taller man;
(Yet beware of deceitful holler men.)
A loveyear true, I'll prove to you,
Your faithful, constant Solomon!
Mr. Solomon! Mr. Solomon!
Your faithful, constant Solomon! (Chorus.)"

"Bray-vo, Bray-vo, Solomon," cried Mr. Jones, after he had vociferated the last note of the chorus.

"I'm sorry, *gents*," said Hebblethwaite, pulling out his watch "to interrupt the festive scene; but I think it's time to shut up shop; so roll over the *'amper*, will you, Smith, till we cage these here blackbirds, as we must be on the look-out for the nightingale, and goldfinch's *key* note, and we have this table to put in order first. And, remember, Dutton will be here at nine; and all the doctors tell me a policeman is worse than poison for my complaint; so I would rather be knocking at our *worthy* friend the baronet's door before that time. So, Smith to the shutters, Jones to the door, Sedgemore and I will do the rest; and here, Smith, are the lucifers; and when you have fastened the shutters, strike a light; and you, Jones, put the large blue bag for the papers and money, on a chair beside the iron safe, all ready."

As these preparations rapidly progressed, Mr. Phippen's and Tom Levens's hearts began to beat almost audibly. At length the hamper was packed, and, according to another amendment of Mr. Sedgemore's, rolled into the sort of roofless sentry-box, in which Levens's desk was situated. Next, the ink-stand, books, pens, and paper, were all carefully replaced on the table, and the green morocco library-chair put back in its usual place opposite the archway for the knees, in the centre of the writing-table; and, the light being struck, the Commander-in-Chief, Hebblethwaite, took from his pocket a dark lantern, and lit the candle within it, from the wax-light that Smith had placed on the table, leaving the latter there, as he said, lest a spark should fall upon the papers;

and, taking the counterfeit key from his waistcoat-pocket, the burly burglar walked as cautiously and noiselessly over to the iron-chest, as if it had really been the dead of the night, and the house full of sleeping inmates, whom he feared to awaken, while Sedgemore preceded him, holding the lantern, and Smith and Jones followed, to hold open the bag that was to receive the plunder.

"I don't know how much more there may be there," said Sedgemore, in a small tremulous voice, which his guilty conscience had lowered into a whisper; "but I know old Golden Phippen got £500 from the bank this morning, and took very little out of it."

Here, a sort of scratching of the key against the iron, in Mr. Hebblethwaite's pursuit of the lock, about as loud as a rat in the wainscot, might be distinctly heard.

"Hold the lantern nearer, Sedgemore; I can't find the lock."

Sedgemore obeyed, and turned the blaze of light full on the key-hole.

"Ah, that's it! Now I can see plain enough; 'scritch, scratch, scrinch, scraunch.' Why h—l and the d—l!—*this is not the key; it won't even go in.*"

"Impossible!" cried Sedgemore; "it *must* go in. I took the impression of the key myself. Here, give it to me!"

But, like the key of the 'Blue Chamber,' it would *not* fit. "Why, why, I can't make it out! There must be some witchcraft about this!" cried Sedgemore, his hair standing on end, and his cheeks perfectly blanched, for failure, or detection are the only things that ever touch a villain's conscience or his nerves.

"Witchcraft be d—d!—you infernal fool!" thundered Hebblethwaite, who glared and bellowed like an infuriated bull, as he poured forth a volley of the most horrible imprecations upon the trembling clerk. "Here's a pretty business!" continued he; "there will be another hour lost in my going for the tools, to say nothing of all the mischances that may happen in the meanwhile; for with such a confounded bungler as you, it's not safe to leave the place a minute."

"Perfectly safe, for we'll take care of *it*, and *you*," cried the four policemen, now rushing out upon them, followed by Mr. Phippen and Levens.

"H—l and the d—l! out with the light, Smith," cried Hebblethwaite, making a rush for it, and darkening the lantern he held; and he had scarcely uttered the words, before the report of a pistol was heard, and a heavy fall and a groan.

"*That* dodge won't do," said Dutton, turning on the light of his own bull's-eye—an example followed by the other three detectives; and no sooner had the light re-appeared than it discovered Sedgemore weltering in his blood, with his head on the floor against the corner of the office-table, where he had fallen, when Hebblethwaite had discharged the pistol at random in the dark.

among the policemen as he thought, and was now in the act of pulling another small hair-trigger pistol from his bosom, when Dutton seized his wrists and manacled them—an office that was also performed for Messieurs Smith and Jones, by two of the other officers, while the third raised up Sedgemore.

"So, then," said Hebblethwaite, with a sort of savage doggedness, "you were all prepared for us, seemingly, by having these bracelets ready. There's treachery somewhere. Cowards are generally traitors; so we owe this hospitable reception no doubt to you!—you maudlin, dawdling, muling, puling, white-livered weazel," added he, grinding his teeth at the bleeding and groaning Sedgemore, whose wound the policeman was endeavouring to stanch.

"You owe it to that Providence," said Mr. Phippen, "which, if it sometimes inscrutably allows villains and villany to have a fearfully long and triumphant reign, generally hurls them from their slippery pinnacle of spurious success at the very moment that they are sounding their brazen trumpet for a victory! Do you happen to know anything of this letter

'To Daniel Hebblethwaite, Esq.,

'Hummums,

'Covent Garden?'"

"The d—l! D——n the letter, and the writer too, for his cursed folly in writing it!" growled Hebblethwaite.

"Don't you include in your anathema the person to whom it is addressed, for his folly in losing it?" asked Mr. Phippen, coolly.

"I tell you what, old boy," said Hebblethwaite, resuming all his usual stolid effrontery, "you and I had better come to terms. I have not passed the last thirty-five years of my life between the East and West Indies, and the Mauritius, in large commercial transactions, without being *intimately* acquainted with Sir Titaniferous Thompson, and still more intimately so with his affairs; you understand—with his *affairs*; and it is impossible to be *that* without having secrets worth knowing—secrets, in fact, worth several thousands of any man's money. Now, say the word; what will *you* give to know them?"

"Myself the trouble of ascertaining them," rejoined Mr. Phippen sternly.

"No use, my good Sir; you might grope about till doomsday, and without a guide; that is, without Daniel Hebblethwaite for a guide. You will never find the clue to that dark labyrinth. His terms are, his own personal liberty, and a free passage to America. What say you, is it a bargain? *Philip Silwood!*"

At this name the old man reeled as if he also had been shot, and would have fallen, had he not clutched the corner of the table; but, recovering himself in a moment, he said, as he wiped the big drops from his forehead, "Whoever you are, you bold, bad man, I fear you not. You may indeed among your other crimes dese-

crate the grave of a long buried secret, and evoke phantoms that curdle memory's retrospective blood; but where no guilt is, you cannot conjure up fiends."

"You do not answer me. Will you buy my secrets at the price I ask? You had better, for they are dog-cheap."

"From your appearance, the peculiar circumstances under which I have made your acquaintance, and your own account of your antecedents, I should not care to trust myself alone with you; and in raking up the cesspool of Sir Titaniferous Thompson's life, things which concern his victims may transpire which I have no right to make public."

"You need not; neither need you be alone with me. The jeweller who furnished me with these ornaments," said he, (nodding to the policeman, and rattling his handcuffs,) can be present to protect you, and need not be the wiser for our conference; as I suppose you speak French at least? And as for my respectability, on that score you can have no doubt, when I tell you that once upon a time, as the story-books say, I was junior partner in the firm of Ricker, Hebblethwaite, and Ricker, of Manchester, who were solicitors to the late Lord de Baskerville, when, as the Honorable Palmytongue Andover, he canvassed that city, *et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.*"

Again Mr. Phippen groaned. "Levens," said he faintly, "give me that candle; and you, Sir," added he sternly to Sedgemore, "quit this place and my service, instantly; you shall be removed to Guy's Hospital. Try, during your bodily illness, to repent of the far worse wounds you have inflicted on your own soul, and if you die under them, may God have mercy upon you. Tom, go for a cab to have him conveyed to the hospital; you need not accompany him, but remain here with Dutton, till I have spoken with this man, and then I shall want you to go with me to the Hummums, to be present at the capture of the chief villain. Now, Sir (to Hebblethwaite,) follow me."

"Not till I have your solemn promise, before all here present, that I shall be set at liberty to depart this *very night* for America."

"Yes, on the express proviso that two detectives accompany you to Liverpool, and never leave you, night or day, till you have sailed, and bring me the captain of the vessel's receipt for your passage-money. I know 'The Hiawatha' sails to-morrow night for New York, for I have goods consigned to her; so that will just do." And so saying, he led the way into the dressing room, taking with him pen, ink, and paper, so as to make Hebblethwaite give his depositions in writing. For one full hour were they closeted, Mr. Phippen looking deadly pale, but perfectly calm, when they came back. In the interim Mr. Sedgemore had been removed to Guy's Hospital; but Messrs. Smith and Jones, closely hand-cuffed, were sitting like two half hanged crows, with a policeman standing beside each of them; while they were gazing vacantly, or it might

be that they were moralizing, on the pool of their accomplices' blood, in which, like a ghastly pleasantry, the mimic white paper star, and blue paper ribbon were now dabbling.

"Bye-bye! sorry for you, my dear fellows," said Hebblethwaite, kissing the clumsy tips of his tan-coloured, stumpy fingers to them, as he passed out between two policemen, who held him by each arm. "Sorry for you, *foi de fidéjussur*, but you see it always has been so, since the world began, and always will be so, till the world is ended—the little are crushed, while the great escape, more especially in *our* line, because vice is the very antipodes of virtue, not only in its nature, but in its results. What I mean is, that *small* virtues, and *great* vices, alone are tolerated in civilized society; and for the same reason—namely, that if either one or the other is *very* great, nobody believes in them. I need not tell you to be *moderate* in virtue, because, with regard to it, your temperance amounts to total abstinence; but be *great* in your own peculiar line, and though you may not attain to the highest grade in politics or literature, which is generally the reward of unscrupulous greatness, yet don't despair; for you have every chance of speedily obtaining appointments under government in the colonies, and if so, remember that D. H. stands either for 'Die Hard,' or, for your faithful friend, Daniel Hebblethwaite. Alas! *au revoir* no more; *mais adieu pour toujours!*" And three cabs having been sent for, and two more policemen, Hebblethwaite and his two keepers were rattled off to Euston Square, while Messieurs Smith and Jones, equally well supported, were taken in the second to Bow Street; Mr. Phippen, Tom Levens, and a detective getting into the third, and driving to the "Hummums," while Dutton was left in care of the offices.

"Is Mr. Smith here?" asked Mr. Phippen of a waiter on alighting at the Hummums.

"Which Mr. Smith, Sir?" was the natural reply.

"Why a Mr. Smith, who was to wait here for Mr. Hebblethwaite."

The Hebblethwaite was luckily a land-mark, or otherwise a Smith might not have brought them any nearer to Smithean identity than B., or C., or D. Smith, and so on through the whole alphabet, then recommencing backwards from the Z.

"Oh! yes, Sir; this way if you please, Sir," and the waiter threw open the door of a room in which Sir Titaniferous Thompson was pacing up and down, and announced—

"The gentlemen, Sir."

"My dear Mr. Phippen!" said the baronet, looking as if a thunderbolt had cleft through the ceiling, and fallen at his feet; but, nevertheless, holding out *both* his hands to welcome the new arrival, at which Mr. Phippen put both of his hastily behind his back; "this is an unexpected pleasure."

"*Very unexpected*, I have no doubt; as for the pleasure, I'm sure

it will be quite equal to what you will feel at the full and circumstantial written confession of your *worthy* accomplice, Mr. Daniel Hebblethwaite, now on his way to America. The cogged dice (here they are, dated, sealed up, and authenticated) by which you cheated Captain Egerton out of fifty thousand pounds, on the night of the sixteenth of April, eighteen hundred and forty seven, at Calcutta. The three forgeries by which you obtained possession of the title-deeds of Xylon Park, and divers other successful speculations too black and too long to enumerate now, and which, but for the respect and the mercy I feel for the mother and sister, whom you, from your ill-gotten superfluity, left to starve, should bring you to the gallows, which, from your youth up, you have passed your life in earning; but I have a punishment in store for you quite commensurate with it, and which, indeed, did you possess a spark of either feeling or conscience (which you do not), would far exceed it."

"Never!" cried the detected villain, of a livid green with conflicting bad passions; "never! I have still money—no one need despair who has—and I defy you all!" as he made a rush towards the door; but outside which his further progress was intercepted by Tom Levens and the two policemen, who dragged him forcibly back into the room.

"Unhand me!" he exclaimed, emancipating himself with one desperate struggle from their grasp. "Do you know who I am? I'm a Member of Parliament!—a Baronet!—an East India Director!—a partner in the Bank of Dobbs, Thompson, and Dobbs!—and the richest commoner in England!—this man accuses me falsely!" But here the mild and truthful habit of St. Stephen's came to his assistance, and, driving down Phillip Phippen, with a deep unuttered curse into his heart, he said, in his blandest tone—"I mean, I'm sure my worthy friend, Mr. Phippen, here, has been misled as to my identity."

"Don't presume to call me your friend, Sir. Policemen, do your duty, and secure that man."

"One moment, my friends," said Sir Titaniferous, putting up his folded hands, with more parliamentary politeness and forbearance, "one moment; just let me take my hat, which is over on that table, and I will accompany you without force, as Mr. Phippen still persists in his *extraordinary delusion*."

And as there was no door at the other end of the room, they allowed him to go to the table for his hat; but before he had reached it, he drew a phial of prussic acid from his pocket, and put it to his mouth; but quick as lightning, Tom Levens, who had never taken his eyes off him, sprang forward, and dashed it to the ground, where, breaking into a thousand pieces, the room became impregnated with the fumes.

"Officers, do your duty; put on the handcuffs, and let us get out of this."

"Shall we take him to Bow-street too, Sir?"

"No; for then, the law *must* take its course, which, for the sake of his poor mother and sister, I do not wish; but depend upon it, he shall not go unpunished; neither shall he pollute this country much longer, nor his crimes escape publicity; for *that* would be bitter injustice. Every shilling of his ill-gotten wealth is now forfeited, therefore, he has no longer a house or home; so I shall keep him, with you to watch him, at my own hotel, till I send him to his proper sphere, a penal colony, from whence I will take good care he never returns."

The little, miserable-looking tadpole M.P. made no further resistance, for he saw it was useless. So he philosophically began to hug himself with the idea, that where there was life there was hope; and he actually began sighing, not like Alexander, for new worlds to conquer, but for new worlds to cheat; and in a colonial world he did not doubt but what he should find plenty of congenial spirits, who, upon that very account, it would be a greater glory to exercise his talents upon. Besides, come what might, he *had* been one of the greatest (?) i. e. the richest, men in London. He had been married to a Lady Georgiana, the sister of a *ci devant* Prime Minister; he had an aunt, a *bond fide* peeress: he had been an M.P., and he still was, and ever would be, a baronet! and with these, and similar soothing reminiscences, he laid down on a flock-bed, in a small attic that night, at the Blenheim Hotel, watched over by two guardian-angels in blue broad-cloth and glazed hats.

"Tom," said Mr. Phippen, in a mournful voice, and the tears in his eyes, that night after he had made the young man eat a good supper, and the supper-things had been removed, "Tom, your courage and fidelity this day, have rescued many victims, and lightened many hearts. May their grateful prayers rise up to the great and good God, and descend in blessings on your head; and sorry am I, Tom, to hurt, or wound you at such a time; but you *must* know it at last, and what must be told, the sooner it is told the better. That — and yet — 'Pon my life — I scarcely know how to send such a poisoned arrow into your heart, neither."

"I think I know what you mean, Sir; that rich bad man up stairs is my poor Janet's brother. She told me this long ago. She said she felt I ought to know it; I loved her the more, when I found I had a sorrow to share with her, for there is no cement for riveting hearts, like a common grief. I shall love her better still, now that I am her refuge from shame; for I shall know that she will not, and cannot desert the heart which is her sanctuary."

"Tom!" said Mr. Phippen, holding out his hand cordially, "you are a good fellow, I always thought so, and to-day I am convinced of it."

"I will at all events endeavour to become so, Sir; it would be unpardonable if I did not; having the benefit of a better teacher than precept—example."

"Tush, Tom! little merit have we, if we are not parched in the shade. I have kept out of what is called the world, and it is easy to keep the quiet under current of life, in a deep and steady course, unimpeded by storms, which agitate its surface; and the world is all surface, Tom, its only depths being whirlpools. Good night; sleep well; God bless you."

And the old man took up his hand-candlestick, and walked into his bed-room, which adjoined the sitting-room.

CONCLUSION.

THERE is now a great *talk* (?) about legislating for women! as even the ass, "the most serious of all animals," as Montaigne calls it, has been legislated for, thanks to Mr. Martin. But it is much to be feared, that redress for women has been delegated to Miss Elizabeth, that well-known female member of the Martin family; and that, according to the usual fate of all reforms consigned to her care, we can only not lose sight of the measure, by keeping it in our eye. The Persians have a proverb, which they apply, when there is much stir made about a matter, without its producing any visible results: "We hear the mill," say they, "but we don't see the corn." And this Ecclesiastical Amelioration Bill being treated like the little dead hunchback tailor, in the Arabian Nights, and pushed on, and poked down the chimney of one session to that of another, makes one fear that there is less sincerity than policy in this stir; for if the former were *primum mobile* of the measure, the whole difficulties of the case could be met at once, by a very simple process; that of taking God into their councils, and making those marriage vows *stringent*, by which men promise, at God's altar, to *cleave to the one woman they make their wife, in sickness and in health; till death do them part, forsaking all others!!* and endowing her with all their worldly goods!! instead of giving men a conventional charter to convert, as they now do, these solemn vows into a blasphemous farce, which according to their interpretation, means, that they have a perfect right (?) to forsake their wife for all other women, and however great and abundant their worldly goods may be, to rob her of the little she has of her own, and pinion her down upon the safe, because on the lingering, side of starvation. But then to be sure, if the laws of God began to be taken into the national councils, and enforced, instead of being, as they now are, *one-sided*, heavy fetters for women, and mere downy legal fictions for men, there is no knowing where this sort of thing might end. And only imagine what a terrible state of things it would be, were our Saviour's command obeyed, of "Let

him who is without sin, cast the first stone? For how many men in either House of Parliament would, under such circumstances be qualified to adjudicate upon divorce cases; more especially, alas! among the legal magnates. And then, precedents are dangerous things, *very*, because PRECEDENTS are the great Reformers of the world; but what courage does it require, to incur for a little posthumous fame which one cannot know, and would not care about if one did, all the pains and penalties of becoming a precedent. When the senate had permitted the soldiers to elect Galba, and had confirmed that election, more emperors were elected abroad in the battle-field by the legions, than in Rome by the senators. And, doubtless, men fear and feel, that were once the laws, in any degree, to be equalized, and made just, towards women, there would be an end of that chartered profligacy, and disgraceful and Draco-like tyranny which our present barbaric ecclesiastical laws delegate to them, without responsibility or reproach. Still, it is *only* the vicious and the villainous—the cowardly and the crafty, among men, who benefit by this iniquitous state of things, and who clamour for its continuance; good, and moral men *see* its crying injustice, as well as women, and wish it altered, though, of course, they cannot *feel* all its enormities, like the wretched victims who are writhing under it; but, having the sense to *see* it, they have also the justice to wish it altered, as *they* have nothing to lose, though they *may* have much to gain by its alteration; just as the honest and upright portion of the community, do not care how stringent and penal the laws are made against thieves and house-breakers, for they *not* being thieves and vagabonds themselves, know that it is to *their* advantage, and that of the common weal, that such miscreants *should be restrained*; and for crime, or rather those capable of committing crime, there is no restraint *but* punishment. As for moral corruption there is none but *exposure*. Your clever, wary villains, who *have* no character to care for, are always mighty tenacious of their “*reputation*,” and padlocks and racks are of course their *chevaux de bataille* for preserving a discreet silence as to their own misdeeds. Naturally, that liberty of speech, of action, and of writing, which was allowed and encouraged under Trajan, of whom nothing *could* be said or written that was *not* to his credit, was carefully forbidden and punished under Nero and Caligula. And, indeed, under the present social (?) and ecclesiastical code of English society, the wonder is, *not* that so many men are abandoned profligates, and brutal husbands, but that they are not *all* such; for what between the triumphant success of the vicious, and the tremendous conventional cant against the murmuring of their victims, *even under the most outrageous and ceaseless wrongs*, it is almost as silly and imprudent for a man to be amiable and virtuous in England, as it would have been for him to be vicious and selfish in Crete or Lacedæmon. How is it possible, then, under such a state of things, that we *can* have any Philoxenes?—who, rather than *count-*

nance injustice, would prefer being carried back to the quarries—aye, even to those hardest of all quarries—mediocrity and neglect! However, till our barbarically disgraceful ecclesiastical laws are modified, that line of Martial's should be engraved upon every hymeneal altar throughout Great Britain—

“Si non errasset, fecerat ille minus.”

But we must now return to the personages of our story, and bid them good bye; since, thanks to good Mr. Phippen, they have all happy homes to go to.

It was the fifteenth of July, 1856, and, although St. Swithin's day, one of the finest that ever condescended to travel by an English sky, for the saint had not shed a single tear—why should he? He was not going to be married! But in the early morning, between ten and eleven, on that day, several carriages might have been seen at the side entrance of St. George's, Hanover Square. From the first alighted Lord de Baskerville, who handed out his mother, looking solemn and serious as befitted the occasion, and her eyes were red with weeping; but it was not for the loss of her last daughter, but for the loss of that daughter's fortune, which she had so imprudently ingulfed in the whirlpool of her *clever* nephew's *clever* speculations, and had, therefore, been compelled to accede to the very advantageous terms annexed by Mr. Phippen to Florinda's marrying her cousin Harcourt. After his lady-mother had swept majestically into the vestry, Lord de Baskerville would have extended his hand to offer the same assistance to his sister; but there was another hand put forward to do that, belonging to a singularly handsome young man, who had been impatiently waiting at the vestry door for that especial purpose; and of the many thousand handsome couples that have been made happy or miserable for life within the walls of that fane, certainly a handsomer one never entered it; and so the crowd, assembled outside, by a sudden burst of irrepressible admiration, seemed to testify. The next carriage was a dark, beautifully-appointed Brougham, with a pair of perfectly magnificent chestnut horses, from which descended Lord and Lady Aronby, who had been married some three months before, at his whilome quiet little church of Lylisfern, and yet they looked as fond of each other as if they were now only going to run their heads into the noose. The next carriage that drew up contained Sir Gregory, and Miss Kempenfelt, Linda and Charley; next followed one with Graham, and Palmytongue Andover, and Dr. Ross, succeeded by yet another, containing Florinda's sister and her sposo, now Duke and Duchess of Darmington. And though last, not least, a plain green Clarence, with the Master of the Revels, Phillip Phippen, Janet Chatterton, and Tom Levens.

As Florinda and Harcourt walked up the aisle, he felt her arm tremble slightly within his own, and whispered a little reproachfully—

"Ah! dearest, you tremble; then you have not entire faith in me?"

She replied with a look of ineffable love, not the less convincing for being veiled in tears—

"——— Te montrer que je crains,
C'est te dire assez que je t'aime!"

On reaching the altar, the beautiful young bride made way for the plain and homely-looking matron, who was come there that morning, to evince what Dr. Johnson truly designated the triumph of hope over experience; and all Lady de Baskerville's angry looks, and haughty bridlings, could *not* alter Florinda's kind-hearted courtesy; who, taking the blushing and bashful Janet by the hand, pressed it, as she, with gentle force, made her kneel down before the altar rails, and Lord Aronby (for he it was who performed the ceremony, *unassisted* by anybody, save the contracting parties) soon converted Janet Chatterton into Janet Levens. After which, Florinda and Harcourt were as indissolubly bound together. During the ceremony, the tears of the assistants, as usual, began to flow; and as usual, from very different causes. Lady de Baskerville's were tears of rage and disappointment to think that Florinda, since she *would* throw herself away upon a half-pay Captain, should add to her absurdity, by insisting upon that odd old Mr. Phippen giving her away, though the man, she must say, *had* behaved very handsomely; but then, when she had a brother-in-law a duke, and a brother an earl, the thing was preposterous. And then the idea of her making way for that dowdy, common-looking woman, in a bonnet that looked like English satin, of Cranbourn Alley manufacture! What a nuisance that sort of people *are*: why can they not, as they improve upon everything now-a-days, put some clause in the patent of every title to bar vulgar relations?

A tear might also have been seen by any scientific gentleman, with a good glass, meandering down Miss Charity's cheek, like a purling stream through the Leasowes, as she looked at the exquisite arrangement of Florinda's veil and orange blossoms, and, without making any allowances for the still more exquisite face under them, thought, that she too *might have worn* them just as gracefully, if—

Well, no matter.

As Lady Aronby turned with a sigh, from contemplating the string of orient pearls that adorned the bride's neck, her eyes and those of Sir Gregory Kempenfelt met; they also were suffused with tears, for they both were thinking that graves are strewn with flowers as well as bridals, only that the former is a dead sorrow, while the latter is not only a living, but often a life-long sorrow. At length the ceremony was concluded; and Mr. Phippen set the fashion of kissing both the brides, facetiously observing, in the vestry, to each of the bridegrooms, that—

"Egad! he was like the Emperor of Russia, for he had only given away what he couldn't keep."

And then, after the usual quantum of sighing, and of signing, and of compliments and congratulations, the *cortège* repaired to Mr. Phippen's new house, in Upper Brook Street, to breakfast, where they found many additions to their party; and among them, Lord Pendarvis, and Robert Chatterton, who had doffed his petticoats for that happy occasion, and looked as rigidly stiff and glossy, as a suit of painfully new clothes could make him; while officiating in the cloak room, was Sarah Nash, in a lavender silk dress and a cap of Haniton lace, with avalanches of white ribbons about it, while Tim, her faithful Tim! wore *his* favours in a collar of little rosettes about his neck, which, as Charley observed—who himself wore a favour as big as a cauliflower—"made a most *bootiful* contrast to his glossy black satin coat."

In the drawing-room was seated old Mrs. Thompson, in an easy chair, dressed in a plain grey silk gown, with a clear lawn handkerchief pinned over the shoulders, a white cap, black mittens, and in her hand a thick crutch-stick cane, with an agate handle, over which her palsied head and plain uncurled grey hair was shaking; and yet, this poor withered crone was only four years older than her blooming buxom peeress sister. Such a hard slave-driver is poverty, whose bonds are drawn on human flesh, and whose indentures are written and signed with human blood!

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Phippen, standing at a table which was covered with papers and parchments, where was also seated a lawyer writing; "before we go down to breakfast, I have a few words to say, and a few matters to settle. In the first place, I must inform you, that through the zeal, sagacity, and fidelity of my good friend, Mr. Levens, here, Sir Titaniferous Thompson's crowning frauds were prevented; by which means I have been happily able to detect several of his *former* ones, and, better still, to make restitution to his victims in many instances, though not in all; and none has given me greater pleasure than to refund to you, Sir Gregory Kempenfelt, the monies which, by a most wicked plot, he swindled a relative of yours out of. Sir Titaniferous Thompson, stand forth, and confirm the truth of all I am about to assert!" And here, handcuffed, and in the custody of the two policemen, the miserable and mean-looking *ci devant* millionaire was dragged in from an adjacent room amid the sobs of his mother and sister, and a look of withering scorn from his fine lady aunt, while ~~he~~ neither looked to the right nor to the left, but kept his eyes on the ground, and his nose in the air, save when the lawyer handed him a pen to append his signature to the written statements which Mr. Phippen read out. "Lady Florinda Penrhyn's fortune of £20,000 was, I grieve to say, irrevocably gone," said he, "before the remains of the wreck got into my hands; was it not so, Sir? Here, sign quickly, for you are not Cardinal de Beau-

fort, and must make many signs before you die. But in order that Lady Florinda, so good and so young, should not suffer for the hoary iniquity of others—that stale injustice which the world has so long been reeling under—I beg to present her with this house, and £50,000.” (Lady de Baskerville stared, and fairly started! for though she had understood that Mr. Phippen was to provide handsomely for Harcourt, she had no idea of the manner, or extent of that provision; but the young people, who had known all about it three weeks before, now only renewed their looks, and tears of gratitude.) “But” continued Mr. Phippen, “as prevention is even better than cure, both the house and the money are strictly secured to Lady Florinda; for although I think my gallant young friend, Captain Penrhyn, has given his country too many proofs of true courage, ever to be guilty of the dastardly cowardice of crushing and ill-using a woman, *because* that woman happens to be his wife, and he is therefore *legally entitled to do so*; yet, till our present iniquitous laws for the pulverization of woman are altered, *if they ever are* (?). I do not think men ought to have such crooked temptation put in their way; and I have the less scruple in putting everything in Lady Florinda’s power, that I am very certain that no woman would ever let even the worst and most brutal husband want money; whereas it is very dubious if even the best men do not think that women have, or *ought to have*, the art of living upon nothing, which is, I suppose, to keep the unities with the *other privileges* they allow them. And now, Levens, to settle my accounts with you, *I owe you* a separate debt of gratitude and therefore give you five hundred pounds a year for yourself, and a house, which I have bought for you at Richmond; but your wife must still retain, as her own, that which she had before she married you; but the house is an encumbered estate, for, unless you and Janet decidedly object, ‘Gad! I, and Sarah Nash, and Tim mean to come and live with you, for I begin to be tired of tossing about the world.’”

“Oh! sir, now you have indeed made us happy—happier than by all your other generosity,” wept the grateful pair, almost simultaneously.

“Glad of it, for that’s what I wish to do. And now, Sir,” added Mr. Phippen, turning to the contemptible-looking culprit, “I have a word to say to you, before you are sent for ever out of a country you have disgraced. However, we won’t quite hide our diminished heads yet, for if our monetary annals bring us such plague-spots as Titaniferous Thompsons, John Sadleirs, and Dean Pauls, our military ones counterbalance these foul corruptions by Williamsses, other Thompsons, Windhams, Lakes, and Tisdales, god-like heroes of Kars and Sevastopol, and whole legions of Scipios and Leonidas, of which Dunham Massys and Harcourt Penrhyns are the *locum tenens*. But you, poor, miserable, bad man—and all had

men are miserable, even at the pinnacle of their ricketty success—of *you*, it may be truly said—

‘The boy was father to the man.’

You began by robbing your own mother, to meet your juvenils speculations and speculations, and you ended by leaving her to starve when Satan filled your coffers to overflowing. But *you* were a rich man, no matter *how* your riches had been acquired, and therefore the world courted and upheld you; *she* was a poor but honest woman, therefore her relations deserted and left her to struggle as *she* could, or to perish as *she* might. By the merest chance I met with your poor, struggling, meritorious sister—I say chance, *that* being the accepted term for such events; but what we call chances are but the arrows of God’s providence, aimed by His unerring hand into the targets of human destinies. Willing to try if you had still one touch of nature, or one spark of human feeling, one day that you came to my office I had purposely left a box in the passage, directed to your mother. True, the name is a common one, but *she* had an uncommon son, and so no question did he ask me as to whom that box might be for, or whither it was going. Now you are once more a single man without incumbances, for your lady-wife has returned to her relations, and I cannot say that I pity her for the loss of the money she married, or for being tied for the rest of her days to the dirty little sow’s ear purse that money was in. Nothing further now remains for me to do but to give you, previous to your being conveyed to St. Catherine’s Dock, where the vessel is which will take you to Melbourne, all that remains of your vast possessions—namely, these three forgeries on the late partners of the firm, Silwood and Adams, this sheaf of shares in the grand duchy of Swillandsmokem lead mines, and these loaded dice, furnished to you by your *worthy* friend and long associate, Daniel Hebblethwaite. Robert Chatterton, the lesson is a severe, but I hope it will be a salutary one. Look well at this man, that you may all your life remember *what a detected villain looks like*, and, in remembering it, never forget the trite but great truth which your copybook tells you, namely that

Honesty is the best policy.

And whenever you feel tempted to do what is not *quite* fair, or to take any advantage of your schoolfellows, or, in after life, of any one else, think of *YOUR UNCLE*, born in a humble but respectable sphere of life, raised by greed of gain above that sphere, and ultimately hurled, by merited disgrace, *far below it*. Now, officers, remove your prisoner from our sight.”

As they were preparing to do so, his poor old mother tottered forward, and said—

“Son!—for, alas! you are, with all your crimes, still my son—

oh! repent before it is too late, if it is only in gratitude to God that you have not stood in a felon's dock *this day*."

"Come, come, old woman, there's no use in your shaking your head at me now," said the wretch.

"I don't shake my head at you, Titan," said the poor creature; "it's palsy that shakes it before its time, from the way, since the hour you were born, that you have wrung my heart."

But here Janet put her arm round her mother's waist and drew her away, as poor Anne Thompson sobbed out, "God forgive you! God turn your heart at last, 'Titan!'"

And as the door closed upon him and the two policemen, Phillip Phippen turned towards Lady de Baskerville, and, looking her steadily in the face for a few seconds, with a mingled expression of sorrow and contempt, he said in a slow but clear voice, as he drooped his head slightly forward, with his hands crossed one over the other—

"And now, Madam, you shall be satisfied; for I see you are asking yourself *who* and what on earth is this odd old man that takes upon him to settle every body's affairs, and even to interfere with the course of justice? *Who* he is, you shall know; but they say it is difficult to know one's self; therefore, *what* he is I may not find it so easy to tell you. One part of my history—a trifling episode, it is true—I already told you, one day when I had the honor of sitting next you at dinner, at your *nephew's* house; I mean the little circumstance of my having had *my all* wrecked early in life. You asked me the name of the vessel? I told you it was the 'Lady de Baskerville,' at least, so it was called, after that lady, but when *my all* went down, she was called the 'Dora Penrhyn.' " Lady de Baskerville changed from red to white, and gasped for air, as every eye, including those of her own children, were turned upon her. "The way of it was this, Madam. My name was not always Phillip Phippen, neither. In my young days I was called Phillip Silwood; I was the eldest son of the largest millowner in Manchester, and was thought *there* a great match; Dora Penrhyn had nothing but a beautiful face, *literally nothing but that*. For a long time my parents objected to the marriage on that account; but nothing, at least nothing *they* could do, could turn me from it, for she had my heart, and I fear, had she wanted my soul, she would have had it too; and—and—fool that I was, I thought that she loved me, for she had told me so, so often. But one evening—it was an evening in May, I have reason to remember it—she met me in a meadow by the river side; she seemed confused; she asked me to gather for her a branch of May; as I did so, a thorn ran into my finger—that was nothing; and yet, sometimes I fancy I feel it still; well, the sun was setting, the river was very calm, and so was her face, and with that calm face she told me that all was over—that *that* was the last time she could meet me; that *her friends* insisted upon her marrying a

much finer gentleman, even the member for Manchester. I was such a thick-headed fool that I could *not* believe it, but she wrote it all to me the next day, and sent me back all my letters, and my picture; *still* I lingered on, like a person walking in a dream, till one morning, oh!—how it rained, but I did not shed a tear—I was awoke from my dream by the ringing of marriage-bells. They were hers! *then* I knew that I had nothing more to do there; I got my father to give me my portion; I went away, I neither knew, nor cared where, but I travelled, and at length I again found myself at Paris, where I had been as a very young man. I picked up one or two sensible ideas there, upon which I have traded ever since; at last I returned—but *not* to Manchester—I've never seen it since—nor never will. I commenced business as a stock-broker in London, changing a name that was odious to me, and took that of Phippen, which had been my mother's; but I did so by royal assent, or else my business transactions would not have been valid. As riches increased, I did not exactly set my heart upon them, but I tried to set my heart by them; for I soon found out that removing other people's miseries is the very best way of lightening one's own. I had no personal expenses, no hobbies but *that one*, and it's astonishing how far money goes in this sort of looking after one's fellow-creatures a little; and it was in this pursuit of 'the Miseries of Human Life' that I got into the habit of going into cheap suburban lodgings; for I soon found, by experience, that the heaviest hearts are not always those to be found in hospitals and alms-houses, nor even begging about the streets. And now, Madam, I have only to restore to you *that*, on which you set so much value, and I, none at all," concluded he, presenting Lady de Baskerville her diamonds, with a low bow, amid the stifled sobs of all present, including those of that lady.

And here breakfast was announced, when the weeping Florinda, quitting Harcourt's arm, passed her hand through the good old man's, who had made them all so happy, saying—

"I am determined, *dear* Mr. Phippen, that I will *not* give you up to any one."

"Well, then, it's a bargain," said the old man, resuming his merry laugh as they all went down stairs; "and though your mother would not have me for a husband, from this out I'm to be my pretty Florinda's father; and 'egad! I begin to think that *this* is better than the original plan. So as 'All's well that ends well,' you see, my dear little girl, poor Phillip Silwood has lived to exchange his broken heart for a sound head, and to thank God that his first and last love-suit was *not*

VERY SUCCESSFUL."

L'ENVOI.

ANOTHER year had passed. It was once more the fair sweet month of May, and a large party were staying at Baron's Court, including Mr. Phippen and Lord and Lady Aronby; when, just as the sun was setting, and casting its long golden shadows on all around, two persons entered the little old village churchyard and walked to a quiet grave under the patriarchal yew trees. They were Harcourt Penrhyn and his mother. She had religiously kept poor May's secret from all, save the one heart from whom hers had no secrets, but most of all had she kept it from her son. Yet now, as their lengthening shadows fell upon that fresh narrow grave, they seemed to repose side by side upon it, and the tears streamed down Mary's cheeks.

"Ah! Harcourt," said she, "you know not what a gentle loving heart lies *there*."

"Not *there*, Mother," he rejoined, pointing upwards.

"True; here," added she; "plant this branch of her sweet name-sake flower on that green pillow at her head, and when I, too, shall have passed away, Harcourt, *promise me*, that till you rejoin us, you will, every year, if in England, come and watch this branch, till it becomes a tree."

"Mother," said he, his own eyes filling with tears, as he folded her in his arms, "from this out, I'll not only watch it and water it, but every year I'll almost count its every leaf, for now you have invested it with a life-long interest for me." And both mother and son consecrated the little branch they had just planted, by kneeling down and praying, that when they also should have gone to their Eternal Home, they might inhabit the same mansion as she who now slept within that twice hallowed grave.

"So earth below and heaven above,
With things we oft have seen before,
But scarce had thought to look on more,
Still wait to meet our love.

And in all change of time and place
A something still is left behind,
Which, lingering last upon the mind,
No changes can efface."*

* From a charming little volume of Poems called "Postical Tentatives," by Lynn Erith. Saunders and Otley, London, 1854.

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